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he replica is visually indistinguishable from the original manuscript, from its vegetable parchment paper with the same texture, thickness, feel and even smell as the original, to the sewing pattern and the paint used for the illuminations."

Herald Tribune, December 7th 2010

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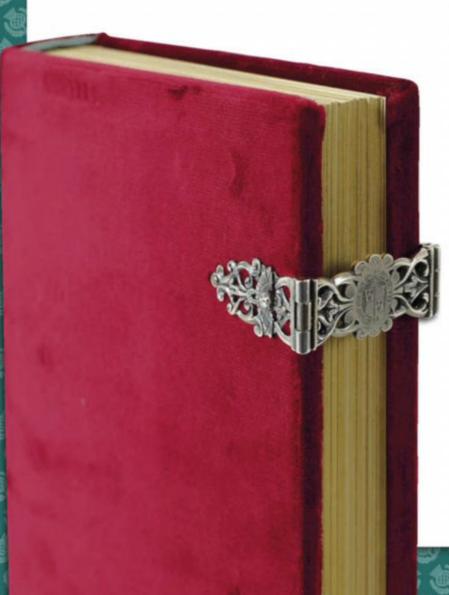
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APRIL 2019

WELCOME



History is being made all the time, but in Britain we do seem to be living through a moment of particular significance for our national story. This issue goes on sale just a few days before Brexit is due to take place, and though much may have altered by the time you read these words, we still thought it would be a good opportunity to draw some historical parallels with the events of 2019. To that end we've asked a group of experts to describe five previous episodes when **Britain's relationship with its European neighbours** was dramatically altered – from the Roman empire to the Munich crisis. You'll find that on page 59.

Another subject dominating the news agenda recently has been **the rise of anti-Semitism**. It is, of course, one of the oldest prejudices, and for the Jews of England the medieval period was a particularly difficult time, ending with their expulsion under Edward I. In this month's *Explorer* piece, on page 80, Jonny Wilkes and Sethina Watson pay a visit to the site of a 12th-century anti-Jewish massacre in York.

Less than a decade after the pogrom in York, a new king arrived on the English throne, who was himself no stranger to wanton violence. While the debates over **King John's badness** seem to have been decided (not in his favour) there are still questions to be asked about the origins of his malevolence. In this month's cover feature, on page 26, Nicholas Vincent delves into John's early life and reveals how his Irish

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Rob Attar

Editor

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

adventures might explain his disastrous reign.



David Olusoga

I have discovered that people want to commune with the ghosts of past residents and owners of their homes, to discover their names and something about their lives.

 David tells us about Britons' growing fascination with the history of their homes on page 38



Kim Wagner

I wanted to explore the Amritsar Massacre of 1919 not as an isolated event but in the context of the British colonial mindset, and violence of the empire, in the 19th and 20th centuries.

 Kim considers what the Amritsar Massacre can tell us about the British empire on page 50



Kelcey Wilson-Lee

Medieval princesses weren't the powerless pawns that we have come to expect. Their position provided the opportunity for extraordinary influence, but also brought heavy expectation to act for England's benefit.

 Kelcey chronicles the ways in which royal women wielded power in the Middle Ages on page 45

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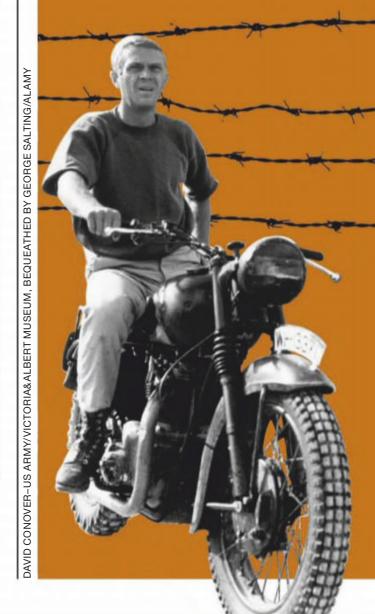
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ANNIVERSARIES

12-13 April 1204

Brutal crusaders plunder the Byzantine capital

The Fourth Crusade runs amok in Constantinople, looting treasures, despoiling churches and butchering thousands

here was never a greater crime against humanity," wrote the great historian Steven Runciman, "than the Fourth Crusade." That is debatable. But there is little doubt that the crusaders' attack on Constantinople in April 1204 marked a nadir in Mediterranean medieval history, from which the Byzantine empire – and Greek culture more broadly – never fully recovered.

The Fourth Crusade was a supremely cynical exercise from start to finish. Having got no further than the Byzantine capital, the joint expedition with the Republic of Venice kicked out the existing emperor, Alexios III, and replaced him with its own men, Alexios IV and his father, Isaac II. But when the people rose against the new rulers, the crusaders decided it was time to attack the city and loot its treasures.

The first assault began on 9 April, but

6

the key moment came on the 12th, when a small group of attackers managed to hack through a bricked-up gateway. First one crusader crawled through, then another, then dozens more. With the defenders fighting desperately on the city walls, Constantinople seemed deserted.

As more attackers poured in, fires broke out across the imperial capital. Then came the full horror. As the crusaders ran amok over the next two days, churches were despoiled, nuns were raped and thousands of men, women and children were butchered without mercy. Formerly one of the greatest, most glittering cities in the world, Constantinople was never the same again. Many of its finest treasures were carried off to Venice; among them were the four horses of St Mark, now one of the Italian city's most celebrated symbols.



The Conquest of Constantinople (c1587) by Palma il Giovane. This great, glittering city of the world never recovered from its sacking by cynical crusaders

3 April 1860

Pony Express hits the road

The first rider for America's legendary mail service departs

the evening of 3 April 1860 was one to remember. For months, a consortium of local businessmen had been working on plans for the United States' first high-speed mail service, with a network of riders to carry post from the Midwest to the booming new state of California, on the Pacific coast. They called it the Pony Express. And from the moment the first rider departed that evening, to the blast of a cannon and cheers from the watching crowds, it became part of American legend.

The origins of the Pony Express were a fascinating lesson in technology, migration and commercial opportunism. The key figure was a stagecoach boss called William Hepburn Russell, who realised that individual riders could carry letters westward much faster than his coaches could. He and his partners arranged to buy more than 400 ponies and to build relay stations across the plains from Missouri to California.

Then they advertised for riders. "Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18," read one advert. "Must be expert riders, willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred."

Successful applicants, supposedly including the future 'Buffalo Bill' Cody, had to swear an oath not to drink, "use profane language" or fight with any other employee. Their task was arduous: each had to cover 75–100 miles a day, with 1,900 miles separating St Joseph from Sacramento, California. Alas, despite its mythical reputation, the Pony Express actually lost money and was closed down in October 1861, having been superseded by the telegraph. Yet the romance of the great transcontinental adventure ensured it a prominent role in the legends of the Old West.

AKG-IMAGE

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian and broadcaster. He has presented numerous programmes on BBC TV and radio





death-derying trip to deliver mail between wilsouth and the boom state of Galifornia

22 April 1915

At the second battle of Ypres, the Germans release **huge clouds of chlorine gas** for the first time, over a section of the front manned by French and north African troops.



Mary, Queen of Scots marries the French dauphin, the future Francis II, in Notre Dame in Paris.



30 April 1803

In Paris, American diplomats agree a deal to buy **828,000 square miles of 'Louisiana'**, containing 15 current US states, from the French.



An illustration from the Italian weekly newspaper *La Domenica del Corriere*, 15 April 1906. "The churches are crowded day and night with people praying for deliverance," wrote one observer

5 April 1906

Restless Vesuvius blows its top, spreading panic and misery

Vast eruption kills dozens and displaces thousands as it drowns Gulf of Naples in smoke and ash

hile the best-known eruption of Mount Vesuvius was the disaster that consumed Pompeii in the year AD 79, further eruptions were recorded for centuries afterwards. By early 1905, there were signs that the demons inside the great mountain were awakening again. That spring, locals reported heavy lava flows from the crater, and the following January there came reports of increasingly violent explosions. Then, on 5 April

1906, came the climax: a vast eruption that engulfed the surrounding villages and killed hundreds of people.

"Many homes have been abandoned for the open air," wrote one observer two days later, "although there has been a thick fog all day and the atmosphere has been dense with volcanic ashes and the fumes of subterranean fires. The churches are crowded day and night with people praying for deliverance from an impending peril, manifestations of which are felt in explosions, which resemble a heavy cannonading, and the tremblings of the Earth, which are constantly recurring."

Although the final death toll is uncertain, there is no doubt the eruption of 1906 wrought horrific damage. The explosion was so fierce that the tip of the volcano was reportedly blown clean off, while ash poured down on the neighbouring villages. And in the city of Naples, crowded with tens of thousands of refugees, there was total panic. "The scene was one of misery and terror," wrote another witness. "Smoke and ashes made breathing difficult. Slight tremblings of the earth were felt, and frequent flashes of lightning cut through the smoke."

6 April 1199

The Lionheart roars his last

Richard I dies of gangrene after chance crossbow shot during castle siege

he death of Richard I on 6 April 1199, writes the historian John Gillingham, "was the decisive turning point in the history of the Angevin empire". For five years, the Lionheart had been pushing back his rival Philip II of France, reconquering much of Normandy and consolidating his hold over Aquitaine. But then, in March 1199, fate brought him to the little castle of Châlus-Chabrol, south of Limoges. It was a pitifully obscure sort of place; for Richard, though, it was to prove fatal.

Historians have argued ever since about why Richard chose to besiege the castle at Châlus. One legend suggests that he had been attracted by stories of buried treasure, but he probably saw the castle as a step towards domination of the Limousin region. In any case, the evening of 25 March found him outside



A c1220 illustration from the *Peterborough Psalter* shows Richard I wrestling with a lion. Legend has it Richard's killer was a French boy wishing to avenge dead family members

the castle walls, inspecting his sappers' progress. A crossbowman took aim from the battlements, and the king sarcastically applauded. A moment later, a bolt struck him in the shoulder. Richard tried to pull it out and failed. The wound turned gangrenous, and suddenly, almost from nowhere, the great king was dying.

One version of the legend has it that when Richard's men dragged the

crossbowman before him, he turned out to be a boy called Bertram de Gourdon, who said he wanted revenge for his dead father and brothers. Richard supposedly ordered him set free with 100 shillings. Meanwhile the gangrene did its work. On 6 April, Richard died in the arms of his mother, Eleanor. His heart was buried in Rouen, his entrails in Châlus. His brother John succeeded as king, and after that it was downhill all the way.

COMMENT / Thomas Asbridge

"Richard's near-incessant military campaigning had drained England's finances"

Richard I died at the age of 41 without having sired a legitimate heir. The Lionheart's untimely demise thus cleared a path to the crown for his muchreviled younger brother, John. Some chroniclers suggested that, while on his deathbed, Richard designated John as his successor, but the strongest claimant in terms of lineage was their nephew, the 12-year-old Arthur of Brittany. As a result, questions of legitimacy dogged John's early reign. These deepened after 1203, when he was implicated in Arthur's murder.

The flaws in John's character soon became apparent. He was a dangerously

unpredictable monarch, distrustful, petty and malicious, and lacked the political judgment and martial genius of his forebears. John proved incapable of defending the Angevin realm forged by his predecessors – which once stretched from the Scottish borders to the Pyrenean foothills – and presided over the loss of almost all of the French territories by 1205. (See page 26 for more on King John).

Nonetheless, John should not shoulder sole responsibility for the turmoil of these years. Richard's near-incessant military campaigning in France and the Holy Land had drained England's financial resources, precipitating a period of intense inflation in the early 13th century. This economic pressure helps explain why the English nobility eventually rebelled and demanded the concessions enshrined in the 1215 Magna Carta.



Thomas Asbridge is reader in medieval history at Queen Mary University of London. His books include *Richard I:* The Crusader King (Allen Lane, 2018) for the Penguin Monarchs series

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ound in the Pays-de-la-Loire region, midway down the western coast of France, the department of Vendée makes the perfect destination for a varied and vibrant French adventure, especially if you're self-catering with Novasol Holiday Homes. You'll have all the freedom and privacy you want, allowing you to live in Vendée rather than just stay there, and you'll get great value for money to boot.

The region's flagship museum, the Historial de la Vendée, offers an impressively diverse range of exhibitions, from military history to nature, with a dedicated children's museum – perfect for a family trip.

The Logis de la Chabotterie, a grand house originally constructed in the 15th century and a crucial setting for the Vendée wars during the French Revolution, is just one historical highlight. You can immerse yourself in the revolutionary spirit at the Refuge de Grasla – a recreated village deep in the forest where civilians would seek shelter from the violence.

And for yet more family-friendly history, the Puy de Fou theme park – second only to Disneyland Paris for popularity – puts on exhilarating performances based on a range of stories, from the Vikings to Verdun. Elsewhere, the ruins of the Roman Catholic Maillezaus Cathedral are a must-see for history buffs.

If you're looking to unwind, choose from Vendée's plentiful beaches, which stretch across more than 120 miles of coastline, many of them FEE Blue Flag-certified.



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This charming, spacious house sleeps up to 10, with a sizeable pool and plenty of outdoor space to relax or play badminton or table tennis. The huge lounge and dining area make this the perfect place for a big family holiday, and if you can tear yourself away from the house, head to the nearby pretty town of Coulognes and the beach lake complex of Chassenon.



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LA JONCHÈRE

This property sits only 10 minutes from the coast and sleeps up to five people. You'll find an attractive, private garden and terrace, as well as a shared swimming pool. The house is located in the centre of the village, while larger Angles isn't far away. Proximity to miles of coastline and pine forests provides ample opportunity for walks and water sports activities.





HISTORY NOW

Have a story? Please email Charlotte Hodgman at charlotte.hodgman@immediate.co.uk



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TREASURE ACT REFORMS

"Online sites like Facebook Marketplace and eBay have transformed the antiquities market"





A government review of the 1996 Treasure Act could see changes to the definition of 'treasure'. **Ian Richardson** (left) of the British Museum explores the potential impact of the proposals

What's wrong with the current legislation on treasure?

In many ways, not a great deal. Since its introduction in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1996, the Treasure Act has been incredibly successful. Before 1996, only about 25 discoveries of small finds were recorded every year under the old law, known as 'Treasure Trove'. That number has now risen to over a thousand.

Under the Treasure Act, public museums must be given the first opportunity to buy items defined as 'treasure'. As a result, over the past 20 years, such museums have acquired more than 5,000 cases of treasure.

So why is the government considering changing the system?

The increase in cases, the success of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in England and Wales, and the growth of online market sites like eBay, Facebook Marketplace, and the many websites of specialist auctioneers, have transformed the environment in which the act operates. Any new legislation would be designed to reflect these changes.

What exactly is the government proposing to change?

Among the government's highlight suggestions is to start defining treasure by its value. At the moment, items more than 300 years old must be made of at least 10 per cent precious metal to qualify as treasure. If the law was changed, it would mean that finds such as the Crosby Garrett Roman bronze cavalry helmet (above), which is made of a copper alloy rather than gold or silver, would be defined as treasure. [As it was, the helmet – discovered by an amateur metal detectorist in Cumbria in 2010 – did not fit the legal definition of treasure, and was bought

by an unknown private buyer.]

Other proposed changes include introducing a fixed end date of 1714 for treasure – so nothing dating from after that year could be defined as treasure – as well as exempting items discovered on Church of England consecrated ground.

What currently happens to treasure after it has been reported?

The finder must report the treasure to their local coroner within 14 days. An expert then prepares a report on the item, and interested museums decide if they wish to acquire it. If they don't, the crown disclaims its interest; if they do, an inquest is held to officially declare the find 'treasure'.

The finder and the landowner are then given the opportunity to waive their reward, in which case the find goes directly to the interested museum. If, however, they seek a reward, the object is valued by the independent Treasure Valuation Commit tee. When a valuation is finalised, the interested museum has to pay the finder and the landowner.

Ian Richardson is treasure registrar for the Portable Antiquities and Treasure department at the British Museum

HISTORY NEWS ROUND-UP

A selection of the stories that have been hitting the history headlines

Goldsmiths to offer MA in black British history

Goldsmiths, University of London has become the first UK university to offer an MA in black British history. Based in the university's Department of History, the course, which launches in September 2019, will explore topics such as black Tudors, African and West Indian immigration to Britain, and black involvement during both world wars.

"Black British history is a growing and exciting field of historical enquiry but is still relatively underrepresented at all levels of UK education," says Dr John Price, senior lecturer and head of history at Goldsmiths. "A recent report on race, ethnicity and equality by the Royal Historical Society (RHS) showed that the number of black and minority ethnic students and staff remains low in UK history departments. This new MA is intended to help address that and to provide an opportunity for people to explore and study aspects of history that are, perhaps, less well known to them."

The RHS report "demonstrates that not enough is being done to promote black British history in UK schools and universities", argues Dr Price, "and that insufficient efforts are being made to encourage the study of history among BME students." The department is currently exploring options for fee-waivers and bursaries to support primary and secondary teachers to undertake the new MA and hopes to see a commitment to curriculum change as a result.

Historians Olivette Otele and Sadiah Quereshi discuss diversity in history on our podcast: historyextra.com/ diversity-podcast



Migrants from the West Indies arrive in England in 1962



The huge stones of Stonehenge may have been transported by land, not sea

50 ancient Egyptian mummies found in Minya

Egyptian archaeologists have discovered 50 ancient mummies – including 12 children – during excavations of four burial chambers in the desert province of Minya, south of Cairo. Cut out of the rock, the 9 metre-deep chambers probably belonged to members of an important middle-class family who may have lived during Egypt's Ptolemaic period (305–30 BC). Pottery, papyri and colourful mummy cases were also discovered in the tombs.



A portrait of Catherine Dickens, wife of Charles, painted in c1845

African WW2 soldiers were paid less than white counterparts

Labour MPs are calling for the UK government to apologise, and pay compensation, to African veterans of the Second World War, following the discovery of a document that reveals Britain's white soldiers were paid up to three times more than their black African counterparts. International development secretary, Penny Mordaunt, has acknowledged that inequalities existed in the past.

Stonehenge bluestones transported by land

Archaeologists have claimed that the Pembrokeshire bluestones used to construct parts of Stonehenge may have been transported to Salisbury Plain over land rather than by sea, as previously believed. The study, published in the journal *Antiquity*, found that some of the stones were taken from the northern part of quarries in the Preseli hills. This would have made transporting them over land easier than by water.



Three of the 50 mummies recently discovered in Minya

Did Charles Dickens try to put his wife in an asylum?

Rediscovered letters at Harvard have revealed that Charles Dickens tried to have his estranged wife, Catherine, committed unnecessarily to a lunatic asylum. One letter, written by Catherine's neighbour Edward Dutton Cook, states that in 1858 – the year their separation was finalised – Dickens investigated sending Catherine to Manor House Asylum in Chiswick so that he could continue his affair with actress Ellen Ternan without reprisals.



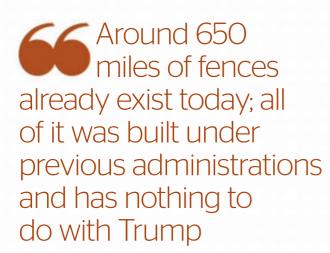
Soldiers of the 11th East African Division in Burma, 1945

The historians' view...

What are the origins of Donald Trump's border wall?

The first US-Mexico border fence was built to keep out ticks - but since then American border angst has gone from strength to strength. Two experts consider the historical foundations of Donald Trump's divisive policy

Compiled by **Chris Bowlby**, a BBC journalist specialising in history



PROFESSOR MARY E MENDOZA

he first federally funded border fence was built by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1911 to stop ticks travelling across the border on the bodies of cattle. The Texas fever tick had spread a disease among cattle in the northern ranges of the US. After a successful eradication campaign, officials worried the tick might reappear. As a safety measure, the USDA built 45 miles of barbed wire fence in segments along the southern California border.

The structures on the US-Mexican border have changed over time, from barbed wire to the big, pillared fences we see in the news today. Fences have grown taller and gone deeper into the earth. For more than a century, growing fences have transformed

what was once an open range into a highly contested and racialised landscape of power, difference, and exclusion.

However, they have never fully worked. The first fences built for people, for example, were almost immediately dismantled by border-crossers. Even more recent fences have been damaged repeatedly. People have cut through, climbed over and tunnelled under. Fences have also diverted migrants through harsh landscapes, resulting in increasing numbers of migrant deaths along the US-Mexico border — a much bigger problem, I would argue, than unauthorised migration.

Border fences built to stop people date back to the 1940s, but outright violent efforts to police human migration date back to the 1970s, when the US hired a contractor to design an impenetrable razor-sharp fence for urban areas along the border. Massive fence construction took off in the early 90s, when President Bill Clinton launched Operation Gatekeeper in Southern California and Operation Hold the Line in south-west Texas. Those operations increased patrols and led to the construction of metal walls stretching for several miles along parts of the US-Mexico border.

After 9/11, George W Bush, who had been thinking of starting a guest-worker programme with Mexico, drastically changed course and eventually signed the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which called for 700 miles of fencing. Apart from the promises made by Donald Trump to build a wall, that was the last big effort to build up the border. Something like 654 miles of fences already exist today; all of it was built under previous administrations and has nothing to do with Donald Trump.

Originally Trump wanted to close the border entirely, which would have represented a marked change. But in recent months, he has claimed the US only needs fences in areas that are easy to cross, and the natural environment will prevent people from crossing along the remainder of the border. This is a continuation of a method that started in the 1990s called 'prevention through deterrence', and is what has led to a huge increase in migrant deaths. It's not new, though. After learning from 'border experts' that patrol efforts are likely to be hindered by opaque walls, Trump has also abandoned the large wall prototypes his technicians were experimenting with. He is arguing now for a steel fence – much like the one that already exists along part of the border.

All of which is to say that Donald Trump is not that different from previous politi-

cians, and certainly not original – he is just louder.



Mary E Mendoza is assistant professor of history at Penn State University





Illegal Mexican immigrants – disparagingly known at the time as 'wetbacks' – await deportation in a US Border Patrol cell in 1951



Freed slaves in South Carolina, c1862. The US's national myths deny the full story of its peopling, says Kelly Lytle Hernández

Slavery, mass incarceration, mass deportation and now a border wall are all tactics in the arsenal of the settler state

PROF KELLY LYTLE HERNÁNDEZ

a wall along the border with Mexico at the time of the First World War. But those patrolling this border in California and Texas were focusing on stopping Chinese immigrants rather than Mexicans. US agricultural producers needed Mexican labour – and the early border structures were anyway not very effective. As the walls became higher, tunnels were dug deeper.

In the 1950s, there was a renewed emphasis on immigration from Mexico in Operation Wetback ('wetback' being a derogatory term for those who had swum the Rio Grande river to reach the US). This was part of a broader attempt to regularise the use of Mexican labour.

However, the operation was also designed by political leaders to appease anti-migrant

opinion in the US. Well-publicised raids by Border Patrol task forces on farms, restaurants and Mexican community centres were part of a governmental show of force, accompanied by military rhetoric about 'all-out war' against illegal migration. Many migrants were forcibly deported.

These actions are all part of a much bigger tension within US history – about how far it has been a nation of immigrants. That is a damaging, offensive myth implicitly denying three of the most significant – and racialised – stories in the peopling of the United States: removal, slavery and deportation.

It is more useful to think of the United States as a nation of settlers, wedded to the notion of replacing native peoples on the land and reproducing white-only or white-dominated communities. Slavery, mass incarceration, mass deportation, English-only laws, immigration restrictions and now a border wall are all tactics in the deep arsenal of the settler state. The nation of immigrants myth – the notion of the poor disembarking at Ellis Island in New York and melding into America – is designed, through its singularity, to deny the full story of the peopling of the United States.

The myth overlooks the vitality and importance of native and indigenous peoples and polities on the lands now claimed by the United States. This is crucially important to note when, for example, it is the Tohono O'odham Nation (with reservation lands

along the southern Arizona/Sonora border) who, by opposing construction on its land, pose one of the most significant threats to the federal government's drive, led by President Trump, to build a border wall.

The nation of immigrants myth denies the history of enslavement that produced the vast majority of the African-American population. African-Americans did not arrive as immigrants. We arrived enslaved, and ever since, from the plantation to the prison, have fought to make America fulfil its promises of democracy and equality for all.

The dispute over the Mexican border has also revealed a continuing belief that Latinx immigrants (people of Latin American descent) do not assimilate. However, these communities assimilate as much as the limitations of the settler state allow. They have always lived uneasily, between knowledge of how important their contribution to the US

economy has been and fear of the anti-immigrant mood that has regularly resurfaced in US opinion and politics.

Kelly Lytle Hernández is professor of history at UCLA

DISCOVER MORE

воок

➤ Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol by Kelly Lytle Hernández (University of California Press, 2010)

Sanctuary for a fox

Londonderry Sentinel 5 December 1931

ox-hunting used to be a well-known feature of countryside life. Yet even in 1931, not everyone was willing to give up the fox to the hounds. Reprinted in the Londonderry Sentinel, a letter appeared in *The Times* from an author who hid under the pseudonym of 'Covert'. On a recent Saturday afternoon, sitting in their drawing room, they had heard a frantic scratching at the French windows. Assuming it to be one of their own terriers, 'Covert' called for it to come in via the veranda, when "to my utter astonishment in walked a small fox. It had a quick survey of the room and jumped on the sofa".

Discovered by the missing terrier, the fox was chased up the wall, taking refuge "on top of a large gilt-edged picture". Shooing out the dog, and leaving the fox in peace, 'Covert' discovered, "to my very mixed feelings, three hounds arrived in the garden and were casting round for the whereabouts of my fugitive", soon followed by the rest of the hunt. Refusing to give up the fox, 'Covert' waited for them to leave – and was determined that "if it should come and scratch at my window again I shall give it sanctuary".

Story sourced from *britishnewspaperarchive*. *co.uk* and rediscovered by **Fern Riddell**. Fern regularly appears on BBC Radio 3's *Free Thinking*

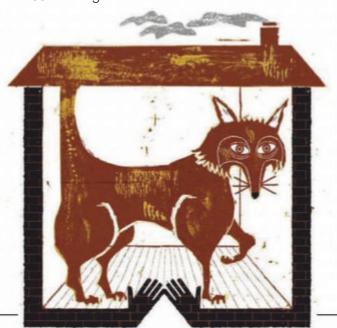
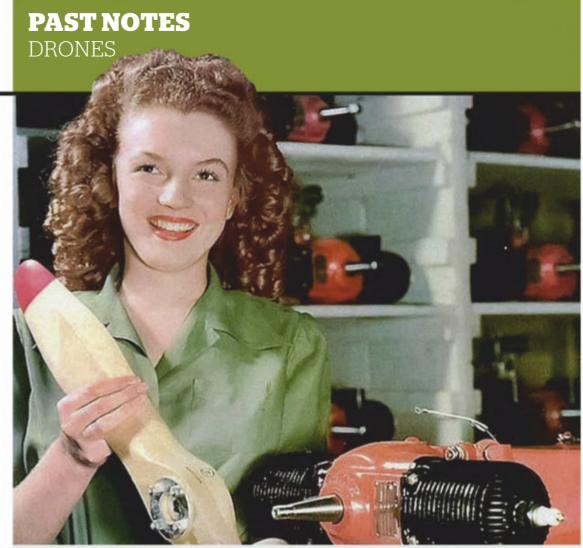


ILLUSTRATION BY BEN JONES



A pre-fame Marilyn Monroe appears in a PR shot with a Radioplane drone

They monitor crops, detect storms, fight in wars... and close down airports. **Julian Humphrys** on the history of drones

When did Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, or UAVs, first make an appearance in our skies?

The first unmanned flights for military purposes date from the 19th century. In 1806, Captain Thomas Cochrane released a series of kites from his ship, HMS *Pallas*, to drop propaganda leaflets over France. In 1849, the Austrians filled 200 unmanned balloons with explosives and launched them against Venice, and in 1898 the Americans used kites with cameras during their war with Mexico. Radio-controlled flight can be traced back to the same year, when the Serbian-American inventor Nikola Tesla patented his wireless remote-control system.

How about unmanned aircraft?

Some pilotless aircraft were built during the First World War, and in January 1918 the US army started work on an aerial torpedo, but the end of the war halted development. Nevertheless, research into unmanned aircraft continued, and in the 1930s the British produced a number of radio-controlled target planes, notably the de Havilland DH82B, or 'Queen Bee'.

Why do we call them drones?

The term drone (a male bee) was first applied to UAVs by Lieutenant Commander Delmar Fahrney in 1936. This was probably in homage to Britain's Queen Bee, as Fahrney was in charge of developing something similar for the US navy.

What caused the expansion in their use?

The needs of the military. During the Second World War, actor Reginald Denny's Radioplane Company produced 9,400 drones for use as gunnery targets. One of its employees was the future Marilyn Monroe, who was first 'discovered' after featuring in a PR photograph with one of the company's drones. Technological advances saw an expansion in their capabilities and UAVs were deployed for reconnaissance during Vietnam. Since 9/11 they have also been employed for targeted attacks - a controversial use, since innocent civilians may be killed. Their non-military uses have also mushroomed, and now include filming, mapping, policing, search and rescue, delivering goods and, it seems, disrupting airports. H

DAVID CONOVER/US ARMY



Michael Wood on... truth and power

"Historians have been expected to corroborate the ideology of rulers"

There's a lot of buzz at the moment on social media about public history and the role of the public historian. I was intrigued by the tale of the Dutch historian Rutger Bregman, who became a global hit at the Davos summit where he accused the attending delegates of flying in on private jets while ignoring the key issue: taxation of the rich. Now, he has created another memorable viral moment in an interview with Fox News's Tucker Carlson, whom he called "a millionaire funded by billionaires with a conservative agenda". Perhaps unsurprisingly, Fox binned the interview.

In the leaked footage Bregman said he "went to Davos to speak truth to power – and I'm doing exactly the same right now". Of course, this is not the first time a historian has spoken truth to power. In China in particular, history has often been a dangerous profession. Condemned for disputing contemporary events with the Emperor Wu Di in the first century BC, the historian Sima Qian accepted the humiliation of castration, rather than committing suicide as a gentleman should, in order to finish his great work of history. At that work's core is the idea that those in power should be guided by morality – and who better than historians to show rulers lessons from history?

Sima's narrative of the first Chinese emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi, contains the chilling tale that the tyrant ordered history books burned and historians buried alive, "for fear of the past to discredit the present". It's a theme that runs right through Chinese history. Literary inquisitions were rife under the paranoid Qing government (1644–1911): publication of histories the authorities didn't like could lead to brutal collective punishment of authors' families and publishers. And that still casts a shadow today. For the current Chinese government, some events in the 1980s remain off-limits to the historian.

All societies value history, but all exact a price from those who explore it. Questioned about history by the Turkic conqueror Tamerlane, the great Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun admits he was so frightened that, "I composed in my mind some words exalting his government so as to flatter him". In most places and at most times, historians are expected to corroborate the ideology of rulers and create narratives that justify and even glorify the rulers' hegemony. Today in China, the Communist party controls history. In India, the world's largest democracy, the ruling Bharatiya Janata party has created its own Hindu nationalist historiography, which it spreads through specially written school textbooks.

In Britain, things have never been quite so edgy – at least not since Thomas Stapleton addressed his translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* to Elizabeth I in the hope it would persuade her of the "true Catholic faith of Englishmen". But here, too, there's been a thorny relationship between truth and power, especially since the rise of popular narrative history in 19th-century Britain. Those Victorian nationalistic certainties came down through the likes of Winston Churchill and Arthur Bryant, who were massive bestsellers during and after the Second World War, and have cast their own shadows right down to Brexit debates.

The reaction came in the 1960s from a new wave of historians, such as EP Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm. But their work was soon contested. I remember talking this over with the historian Hugh Thomas, who became chairman of Margaret Thatcher's think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies. In *History, Capitalism and Freedom*, a 1979 pamphlet, he argued Britain's decline was due to the growth of the state, and that we should re-establish a sense of the glories of English history that had been obscured by Hobsbawm and the rest. The UK history curriculum was changed to meet this need.

History, then, is always political, and the gatekeepers are the powerful. That said, one may be sceptical about speaking truth to power. "Power knows the truth already," Noam Chomsky says. It is the oppressed who need to hear the truth, he argues, not the oppressors.

Michael Wood

is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC documentaries and series, including *The Story of China* in 2016

BBC



GETTY IMAGES

ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG

Battle of Britain myths

Anthony Cummings (Letters, February) complained about the myth that lone pilots fought against impossible odds and stopped the invasion during the Battle of Britain. The myth is indeed nonsense, as the RAF had more pilots and more suitable fighter planes. The RAF should have been classed as the favourite to win, fighting on home ground – a big advantage.

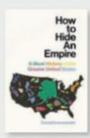
The other myth is that Hermann Göring, the Luftwaffe commander, threw away an easy victory by calling off the attacks on the Chain Home radar stations too soon and not adopting Adolf Galland's free-roving fighter tactics. With regard to the radar stations, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to predict that the British could have sent out dummy signals when the pylons were damaged, and meanwhile they also had plenty of mobile radar stations.

In order to exploit Galland's free-roving

tactics, Göring would have needed 300 extra Messerschmitt Bf 109s, all equipped with fuel drop tanks, plus the pilots to fly them, as well as the mechanics to service them. He did not have all these, so his best shot was to close-escort the bombers and attack civilian targets, hoping civil unrest would unseat the Churchill government and lead to a compromise peace. So, as Anthony Cummings says, the emergency workers, and civilians 'taking it', all had a role to play in the victory.

Michael Akeroyd, Leeds

We reward the Letter of the Month writer with our book of the month. In this issue that is How to Hide an Empire: A Short History of the **Greater United States** by Daniel Immerwahr. Read the review on page 69



again) the RSC's magnificent cycle of Shakespeare history plays, which sparked my interest in that period of history, with which I now have a deep fascination, as a whole bookcase testifies!

Many years later I saw (over and over

Jessica Pacey, Newark

Long multiplication

Regarding the article Class Warfare (March), the authors seem surprised that there were school classes of "up to 40 pupils". It may interest them to know that at my primary school, in suburban Liverpool in the 1950s, I was in a class of 52 children! Of these, 50 passed the 11-plus exam to go to grammar school. Ron Bibby, Southport

Common knowledge

Hugh Rogers (Letters, March) repeats a familiar fallacy about the 1975 referendum on the UK's membership of the common market: that the electorate was told it would only be about trade. In fact, it was made clear there was a political and social side to the European Community. Prime Minister Ted Heath stated this directly: "The community we are joining is far more than a common market. It is a community in the full sense of that term." Hugh Rogers' letter is, sadly, yet another claim from the Leave camp that is not based in reality. James Kennedy, Belfast

A passage from India

I write regarding the article *The Long* Journey to a New Life (February). Yes, it was a long journey for the expelled



Station to station... our February feature described the lives of Ugandan Asians arriving in Britain in the 1970s

All is true?

I was disappointed to read in your March issue (Opinion) that Michael Wood is happy for film-makers to play fast and loose with the facts if a film is set long in the past, but not if it depicts modern events. We cannot have it both ways. Either films should be accurate or they need not be. I believe they should be, and I feel that the article confuses two things: creativity and fake news.

The majority of film-goers will assume that the representation of a historical figure on the screen is accurate, unless told otherwise. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case. I'm sure that most viewers will go away from Mary Queen of Scots thinking that the queens really met. This is not creativity, it is a gross distortion of the facts. It is fake news. Creativity is seen at its best in a film such as All Is True, where we really do not know what happened in certain parts of Shakespeare's life and so the film-maker has used his imagination.

We already pass down from generation to generation myths such as Alfred burning the cakes, Ralegh laying down his coat over a puddle, Drake playing bowls

before the Armada and Columbus discovering America, without adding more fake news into the mix. History gives us a sense of identity and our place in the world. It is vital that it's not based on deceit.

Ian MacDonald, Essex

Michael Wood replies: I didn't say that film-makers should play fast and loose with the facts. I just think they can be (have to be?) more creative with events long ago - though The Favourite really didn't do it for me. But when it comes to recent events that still directly influence contemporary politics, I think film-makers have a greater obligation to be accurate. I'm happy for Alfred to burn the bread - which, who knows, he may have done!

Bard times

I fully support Michael Wood's argument that historical films and drama promote a public interest in history. At school in the 60s, the history curriculum ignored the 1067–1485 period. (I wrote 1067 deliberately – we knew of the battle of Hastings but that was it).



Saoirse Ronan as Mary, Queen of Scots in Josie Rourke's recent biopic. Reader lan MacDonald believes historical films should be accurate to avoid spreading fake facts

Asians from Uganda to the UK. But many had been making that journey from India since the 17th century. And over those many years, their reception had been as mixed as it was for these refugees from Idi Amin. The first people from India to settle here were the domestic servants of East India Company officials who were returning home. The company employed many seamen (or 'lascars') on its vessels, and some remained here on discharge. Their employment extended to other traders/ shipping companies over the years. That's the beginning of a long story! Marika Sherwood, senior research fellow, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London

Border patrol

I feel compelled to comment on the letter from an Ohio writer in which there is reference to the natural borders of America (January).

As a resident of Quebec, I feel it incumbent on me to point out that the Saint Lawrence river is not a natural border of the US. Further, in terms of the borders so described, it would appear that both America's most southern state and the most northern/western state have been overlooked.

Adding insult to the injury of not only Quebec, but also New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island being included as part of the United States (all being south of the Saint Lawrence), your

magazine also awarded its 'Letter of the Month' to the writer. One might have thought this geographical error would have been noticed.

Alan Eastley, Quebec

King and the castle

As a member of the Richard III Society, I was delighted and pleasantly surprised that Robert Lindsay choose Richard as his history hero (January). I admire Robert as an actor and totally agree that Richard III was a victim of Tudor propaganda. There is no evidence that he had anything to do with the disappearances of the princes from the Tower.

At present, there is a project in development within the society, led by the historian Philippa Langley, to uncover the mystery behind the princes. We all are very grateful to Philippa and Dr John Ashdown-Hill (now sadly deceased) for finding the remains of Richard III in Leicester. Hopefully, she can shed some light on this mystery as well.

Dr R Pacak OBE, Hounslow

WRITE TO US

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SOCIAL MEDIA



What you've been saying on Twitter and Facebook



Can Winston Churchill still be considered a hero?

@sf_lang The question is wrong. What is in question is our search for heroes rather than heroic moments. To save both Britain and the world from Nazism while staring down defeat is breathtaking heroism. It doesn't efface his faults but neither do they efface the heroism of that moment.

@gharman12 Am torn on this. In regard to his bulldog spirit displayed during World War Two, I would say yes. But... we have to have honest discussion and debate on Churchill's views on empire, including his disparaging comments about India and Gandhi.

@Megan35055855 I think we focus on the areas that we want to focus on. We don't always like looking at these influential people in any sort of negative way. He's a greyarea person. He's neither a hero nor a villain.

@DustOnSpaceRock Yes, he can, based on the undeniable (if perhaps a tad exaggerated) role he played as World War Two prime minister. He can also be considered a villain for many other aspects of his record. It does not need to be a black and white, either/or in my view. We need to be comfortable with complexity.

@TzarinaDraconis Churchill was the best person we could have had as wartime PM. He obviously made errors (he was only human). To the people of the time he was a hero. We cannot keep judging people outside of the context of their time period.

@scfeek His actions held the English firm. He alone was the voice that kept the Germans out. Regardless of the man, the hero must live on.

@anthonyhistoryk If we consider his actions with regard to India, then he can also be thought of as a genocidal maniac.

@LordMayoCVHS Sure. While not without flaws, he constantly overcame failure or hardship to lead. From the Boer War to the failure at Gallipoli to challenges within his own party, he rose to prominence and led.



THE NOT-SO GREAT ESCAPE

With help from Hollywood, a mass Allied breakout from Stalag Luft III PoW camp has become one of the most feted episodes of the Second World War. But, writes **Guy Walters**, the reality of events 75 years ago was far less triumphant

PoWs in the Second World War

he last thing Squadron Leader Len Trent hoped to see when he emerged from the tunnel was a rifle being shakily pointed at him by a German guard. As he slowly crawled out onto the snow, Trent heard a panic-stricken voice bellowing from the woods a few yards away. "Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" it shouted. It belonged to a fellow squadron leader and escaper called Laurence Reavell-Carter, who was desperate to ensure that Trent didn't get a bullet through his forehead.

Reavell-Carter's words did nothing to calm the guard, who immediately fired a round off into the air, shattering the still early hours of a sharply cold morning. Trent jumped out of the tunnel, and raised his arms. There could be no better time than now for him to try out his elementary German.

"Nicht scheissen!" he shouted. "Nicht scheissen!"

The guard looked perplexed – as well he might. For rather than using the German word for 'shoot' ('schiessen'), Trent was instead imploring the guard not to defecate.

In the confusion that reigned, another escaper, Flight Lieutenant Michael Shand, decided to take full advantage and scampered into the woods. The guard, too slow to react, simply blew his whistle, while doing his best to keep his rifle trained on Trent and Reavell-Carter, as well as two other escapers who had left the tunnel.

For these four men, their attempts to flee the notorious Stalag Luft III prisoner-of-war camp were over almost as soon as they had begun. Their roles in the 'Great Escape' had been very small indeed. But while they waited to be taken away for questioning, 76 other escapers were now on the run, doing their best to get back home and rejoin the fight against the Nazis.

The story of what happened on the night of 24/25 March 1944, and in the subsequent weeks 75 years ago, is well known to many. Immortalised by the 1963 film starring Steve McQueen and Richard Attenborough, as well as in countless books and documentaries, the Great Escape has entered into our national wartime mythology, alongside other momentous operations such as Dunkirk and D-Day

However, in sad and almost unpalatable truth, the Great Escape was anything but great. Instead, it should be seen largely as a failure, a hubristic exercise that needlessly risked young lives, and had the very opposite effect to what was intended. In the words of one prisoner of war (PoW), it was "an act of military madness" that resulted in 50 recaptured escapers being shot, and made not an ounce of difference to the war effort.

As we commemorate those who lost their lives, we should not be afraid to examine why they died, and to look beyond the triumphalism of the movie, and to ask whether the Great Escape was really worth its appallingly high cost.

A jolly public school

Thanks to their depiction in numerous stirring movies, we tend to think of Allied PoWs as robust chaps, escape-hungry heroes always ready to attempt a breakout when given the slightest opportunity. The camps themselves, although looking pretty basic, seem relatively comfortable, and the prevailing atmosphere appears to be one of a jolly British public school

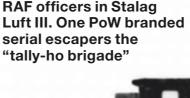
The Great Escape should be seen as a hubristic failure that needlessly risked young lives. It made not an ounce of **difference** to the war effort

transported to a Silesian wood.

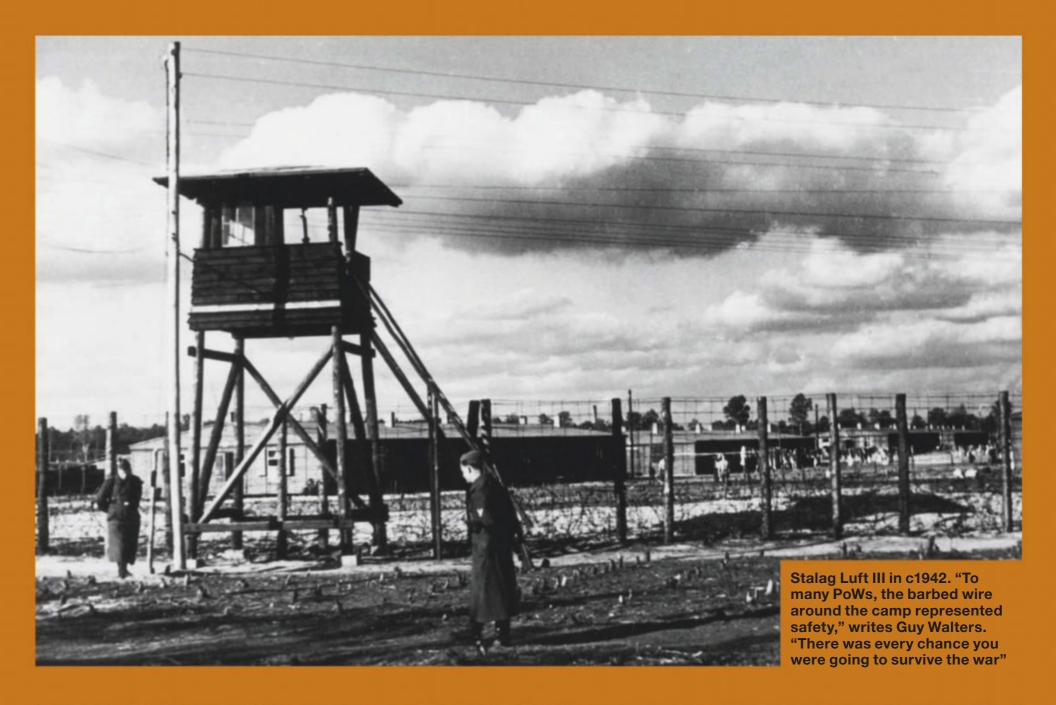
Such a portrait is seriously misleading. Camps such as Stalag Luft III – which was established by no less a figure than the head of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Göring, to incarcerate downed Allied air force officers – were tough places. Food was minimal and largely unpleasant – a German dish called 'fish cheese' was particularly loathed - and conditions in the huts grew increasingly cramped and unhygienic as more prisoners inevitably entered the camp during the later stages of the war. Even in a time far less sensitive to such matters, reports made by inspectors from the Red Cross showed that many prisoners suffered from mental health issues engendered by a sense of failure, boredom, captivity and claustrophobia.

It is tempting to suppose that many PoWs would have wished to escape, but surprisingly it appears that most had no desire to do so whatsoever. Although everybody wanted to be back home, only a third actually wished to mount escape attempts, according to the legendary escaper Jimmy Jones. Why then, in contrast to the movie versions of the camps, was escaping a minority activity?

The truth is that, as well as representing captivity, the barbed wire around the camp also represented safety. If you were locked up in a PoW camp, there was every chance that you were going to survive the war, unlike comrades still flying Lancasters over Berlin. As it was, most captured airmen had survived being shot down, and were not overly eager to get into a bomber or fighter ever again. It was for this reason that many refused to sleep in the top bunk, as regular nightmares about falling from the sky would see the sleeper rolling out and landing in a painful heap in the middle of the night. Why risk your neck trying to escape, only to have to return to life-threatening sorties? Many felt that they













Eden Tells Full Story of Stalag Shootings; says, "These Foul Criminals Shall Be Tracked Down to the Last Man"

Y OFFICERS MURDERED; **BUTCHERY**" "COLD ACT OF

Bombs' Toll

FEB. RAIDS

Mr. Herbert Morrison, Home Secretary, in a statement on the flying bombs in the House of Commons to-day, said: "It is of the first importance that we should not give the enemy any assistance to direct his blind shooting, or give any indication of the measures devised and being devised, to destroy his weapons.

The attack started on th

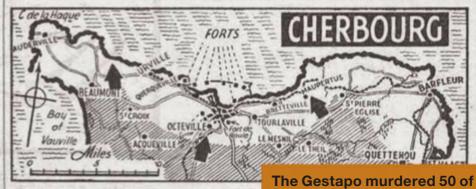
Morrison on Flying JUSTICE AFTER THE WAR

Mr. Eden, Foreign Secretary, after making a statement in the House of Commons to-day on the shooting of R.A.F. prisoners of war who were at Stalag Luft III., said:

"FROM THESE FACTS THERE IS ONLY ONE POSSIBLE CONCLUSION: THESE PRISONERS OF WAR WERE MURDERED AT SOME INDEFINITE PLACE, OR PLACES. IN THEIR REMOVAL FROM THE GESTAPO PRISON AT GORLITZ ON SOME DATE OR DATES UNKNOWN.

"H.M. Government must, therefore, record their solemn protest against these cold-blooded acts of butchery. They will never cease in their efforts to collect

T PISTOL RANGE



Russians

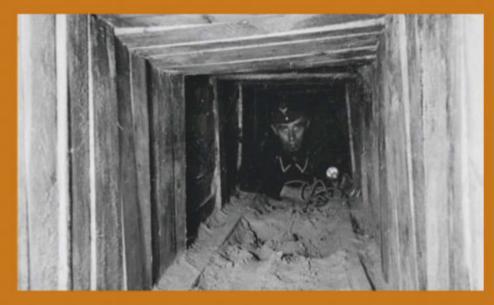
TO-DAY'. Operations against of Cherbourg are satisfactorily. the Stalag Luft III escapees, as reported by the Evening Standard in June 1944



German officers examine the entrance to one of Stalag Luft III's escape tunnels shortly after the breakout



The ladder that took PoWs to 'Harry', the tunnel through which 80 men clambered to freedom in March 1944



A German guard peers out of the gloom of 'Harry'. A number of escapees had panic attacks while crawling through the tunnel

had done 'their bit'. For them, the war really was over.

Besides, contrary to popular misconception, there was no 'duty' to escape, but merely to evade being captured. If there was any such duty, then it was more from societal pressure than anything codified. But with the majority of PoWs not wishing to escape, such pressure was not as significant as might be suspected.

PoW camps also offered the chance for self-improvement. The detainees could take degrees, gain accountancy qualifications and learn new languages. As the tide of war started to turn in the Allies' direction, many looked to their lives after the war, and realised that they could put the years spent behind the wire to good use. Today, of course, we know less about this side of camp life for the simple reason that it is hardly the stuff of great cinema or a thrilling read.

A doughty roisterer

Escaping was seen as the kind of activity enjoyed by what one PoW in Stalag Luft III cynically called the 'tally-ho brigade'. Today, they might be described as 'rugger buggers' or, more flatteringly, 'alpha males'. Whatever

Mass breakouts actually assisted the Nazi war effort, as the heightened security stymied every other person trying to escape the clutches of the Third Reich

Roger Bushell,
the architect
of the Great
Escape, felt a
sense of failure
when he was
shot down

we label them, there is no doubt that these were men who wanted to prove themselves, and by escaping, to have a 'good war'.

Of all those involved in the Great Escape, there can be no doubt that its architect, Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, was a prima facie example of a man who had a lot to prove. Born into a wealthy mining family in South Africa, Bushell was a daredevil downhill skier, a flamboyant barrister and a doughty roisterer, who had hung out with a fast and aristocratic set in London after coming down from Cambridge. Bushell was the type of man who definitely wanted to have a good war, and when he was shot down in May 1940 in his Spitfire on his first day of contact with the enemy, he felt – perhaps more than any other in his situation – an acute sense of failure.

For the next two years, Bushell dedicated his life to escaping, and he mounted several daring but unsuccessful attempts from various camps. When he arrived at Stalag Luft III in September 1942, he came with a big reputation both among the PoWs and the Germans. The latter regarded him as a "great criminal", while many PoWs did not take to his overbearing attitude, which they regarded as arrogant and "lawyerly".

After so much failure, Bushell was determined to do something big, and the plan to build three tunnels called Tom, Dick and Harry was hatched. Bushell's rationale to build three was simply based on bluffing the Germans, who might conceivably suspect one tunnel was being built, but never three. And Bushell did not just want a few men to escape. He wanted hundreds to get out, and in doing so, to cause chaos and to hamper the German war effort by tying up men and resources.

It is this notion of opening a 'front within Germany' that is one of the most pernicious myths of the Great Escape. In fact, mass breakouts actually assisted the Nazi war effort, as the ensuing general alert and heightened security stymied every other person trying to escape from the clutches of the Third Reich. When 43 Allied PoWs escaped from another camp in 1943 (see box right) the ensuing search netted not only all the escapers, but 14,000 other escaping PoWs, foreign workers and convicts. By mounting a great escape, Bushell would be placing at risk every enemy of the Nazis who was on the run.

In addition, the idea that the Germans would tie up valuable frontline troops to hunt for escapers holds no water, as the majority of the hunters were policemen, reserve troops in barracks, and even forestry workers. It made no difference to any Allied soldier facing frontline German troops whether there was a great escape happening within the Third Reich or not.

Ironically, when the Germans guarding the PoWs in Stalag Luft III got wind of a mass breakout, they actually warned Bushell and his comrades that such an action would be counter-productive. One German officer even recommended that they escape in pairs or in threes, to avoid causing the heightened security that would only make successful escapes less likely.

The game's up

There was another elemental problem – the fact that escaping was highly dangerous. Shortly before the Great Escape, PoWs all over the Third Reich were issued with notices that stipulated that "escaping has ceased to be a sport", and that escapers were liable to be shot on sight. Again, the Germans warned Bushell and his men that such warnings were not bluff, but they were not heeded.

Of course, doing what the enemy tells you to do is hardly the stuff of heroism, but the dynamic in many PoW camps was more akin to the relationship between schoolmasters and pupils. The comparatively elderly officers in charge of the camps saw the PoWs as their charges, and felt a huge sense of responsibility and duty of care to keep their 'boys' from

falling into hands of the more extremist and murderous elements of the Nazi machine. Besides, by the beginning of 1944, it was quite clear to the PoW population which way the war was going. Recently-downed airmen were able to reveal that the invasion was imminent, and that it was better to sit tight.

But still Bushell pressed on, and when the escape did take place in March 1944, all kinds of things went wrong. Escapers forgot to pull each other through the tunnel on specially built trolleys, some had panic attacks, and their lightweight clothing was entirely inappropriate for the freezing conditions. Some of those lucky enough to have overcoats forgot to remove labels identifying them as coming from London tailors. Forged passes contained elementary errors.

It is hardly surprising that the vast majority of the escapers were captured within 48 hours, and had only made it a few miserable miles away from the camp. Only three men – two Norwegians and a Dutchman – reached Britain. Those who were immediately sent back to Stalag Luft III were the lucky ones, because they never fell into the hands of the Gestapo, who murdered 50 of the Great Escapers – on Hitler's orders – as a punishment. That number included Roger Bushell, who was shot in the back of the head while he was urinating on the side of the road.

Decades later, shortly before he died, one former PoW at the camp admitted to me that the whole enterprise may have been ill-judged. "I sometimes think it wasn't worth it," he said. "Fifty men's lives it cost to tie up those Germans. Inevitably, they would have lost the war – and 50 people would have been alive today." A former German officer at the camp was even more damning, stating after the war that the breakout was a "silly idea".

With such a high human price, dismissing the Great Escape as "silly" does seem disrespectful. After all, these were young men who simply wanted to do their 'bit', no matter how small, and they certainly did not deserve their deaths. Perhaps calling the escape 'great' helped their relatives in making sense of the sacrifices their loved ones had made. But with the passage of 75 years, the time is surely right to give the event a cooler appraisal.

Guy Walters is an author, historian and journalist. His books include *The Real Great Escape* (Bantam Press, 2013)

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WW2 CAPTIVES ON THE RUN

1 Szubin, March 1943

No home run for Allied fliers

Forty-three Allied airmen, under the command of the indefatigable escaper Harry 'Wings' Day, tunnelled out of Oflag XXI-B near Szubin, 150 miles north-west of Warsaw. Not one of the escapers made a 'home run' to Britain, and all were recaptured, along with a further 809 PoWs on the run from other camps, 8,281 absconding foreign workers, and 4,825 others wanted by the police. Wings Day was transferred to Stalag Luft III, where he helped Roger Bushell mastermind the Great Escape. Despite later being imprisoned in Sachsenhausen concentration camp, Day survived the war.

2 Eichstätt, June 1943

A fleeting taste of freedom

On the night of 3–4 June, 65 Allied PoWs escaped from Oflag VII-B in Bavaria through a tunnel that had been tortuously dug through rocky ground. Led by Jock Hamilton-Baillie, the aim was for the men to escape 150 miles south-west to safe and neutral Switzerland. Not one man made it, and all were recaptured within a fortnight. As was the case in Stalag Luft III the following year, the Eichstätt tunnel featured electric lighting and a trolley system.

3 Edelbach, September 1943

A mass French breakout

On 17-18 September, French PoWs at Oflag XVII-A at Edelbach in northeastern Austria mounted an escape that made the Great Escape look relatively paltry. A total of 132 officers escaped through a 300ft tunnel that had been dug using spades and wheelbarrows that had actually been supplied by the Germans for the PoWs to dig slit trenches to protect themselves from air raids. Only two made it to France - which was, of course, still occupied. It was after this escape that the Germans issued the notice warning PoWs that escaping was no longer a "sport".

ITWASIN IRELAND THAT KINGJOHN REVEALED HINSELF AS A MONSTER

NICHOLAS VINCENT ON A MEDIEVAL KING'S DESCENT INTO EVIL



Historians these days are a lot more cautious in declaring quite what changed as a result of Magna Carta. However, there has always been a much clearer consensus over John himself. The king, in the words of a contemporary chronicler, "was a very bad man... brim-full of evil qualities". Or as William Stubbs, greatest of King John's Victorian biographers, put it, John was "the very worst of all our kings... polluted with every crime that could disgrace a man".

Through military incompetence, John lost most of his family's lands in France. He lusted after the wives and daughters of his leading Anglo-French barons, bullied the church, refused to govern by custom or law, delighted in cruelty, especially to women and children, and in general revealed himself as a tyrant unfit to rule. Magna Carta, according to this interpretation, was a response to a system of royal misgovernment, extending to John's dealings not only with the English barons but with the pope in Rome, the kings of France, and the peoples of both Scotland and Wales.

There is, strangely enough, an absentee from this list of John's 'victims': an absentee that now demands a hearing. John ruled in England from 1199 to 1216, but in Ireland for more than twice as long. First nominated as Ireland's future governor in 1177, he commanded military expeditions there in 1185 and 1210. In the process, he became one of only two English sovereigns before Queen Victoria to have visited Ireland twice. It was in Ireland that John first learned to behave as politician and lord. It was to Ireland that he and his followers considered fleeing at the end of his life, with England itself in turmoil, threatened by civil war and a French invasion.

Anglo-Norman freebooters

Even at Runnymede, Ireland demanded a hearing. In its very opening words, Magna Carta proclaims itself a charter issued by John King of England and Lord of Ireland. As this and many thousands of other royal letters testify, John was the first English king officially to include Ireland in his royal title. Far from being ignored at Runnymede, Ireland and the Irish were there in force, at least if we now revisit John and his reign, looking for the ways in which John and his style of kingship were themselves moulded by his Irish experience. Historians in the past have asked what effects John's rule had in



King John depicted in an Irish coin from c1207-11. By the end of his reign, aristocrats on both sides of the Irish Sea had grown to fear and despise him

Ireland, either for good or ill. But what if we now reverse that question and ask: what effect did Ireland have upon King John?

The groundwork for John's relationship with Ireland was laid in 1171 when his father, Henry II – attempting to extricate himself from the political crisis provoked by the murder of Thomas Becket – crossed the Irish Sea to impose his authority on a group of his barons who had seized lands there. At first, Henry gave Richard 'Strongbow', the leader of this group, the task of restoring order to the colony. But five years later Strongbow was dead, and so in 1177 Henry turned to John, appointing him the future ruler of Ireland. John, the youngest of Henry II's four surviving sons, was just 11 years old.

John was now promised sovereignty over a

de Lacy in the kingdom of Meath to the north of Dublin, Philip de Braose in Limerick and the far west, and the Geraldine clan in Cork and the southern kingdom of Munster. These Anglo-Irish colonists were in turn offered their own semi-independent lordships if only they could first conquer the native Irish.

group of Anglo-Norman freebooters: Hugh

This was no mean feat. Hugh de Lacy, Strongbow's successor as Irish viceroy, was murdered by an Irishman, struck with an axe while overseeing the construction of a castle at Durrow. Meanwhile, John's first expedition to Ireland, mounted in 1185 when he was 18, has been written off as a failure. This negative assessment we owe to the expedition's chief reporter, Gerald of Wales.

According to Gerald, shortly after his arrival at Waterford, John allowed members of his court to mock the native Irish, and even to tug on their long, shaggy beards. Youthful folly, Gerald hints, rendered the expedition futile. The natives, he tells us, considered John "a mere youth... a stripling who listened only to youthful advice". John himself returned to England in December 1185, to be presented with a golden coronet decorated with peacock feathers sent to him by the pope: no real substitute for the recognition as king of Ireland that he had originally sought.

There is much in this account that is biased or misleading. Historians have scoffed at John's peacock coronet, not realising that a

While in Ireland John developed his taste for headhunting, collecting the heads of dead enemies as trophies

crown of peacock feathers was a symbol specifically identified with triumph and military conquest. It was just such a 'tufa' of peacock feathers that the emperors of Byzantium wore on returning from successful campaigns. By sending a peacock crown, the pope was honouring John, not scorning him.

Historians have also ignored the 20 or more land grants recorded in charters that John issued while in Ireland. These tell a story very different from that related by Gerald. Here we find the young John deliberately, and with a fair degree of skill, building up both an entourage and a future administrative elite. It was under John, in 1185, that families such as the Burghs, the Verduns and the Butlers were first recruited into Irish service, deliberately implanted there in competition with the pre-established Anglo-Irish elite. For the next several centuries, it was these same families that were to serve as the backbone of England's colonial administration.

Native dynasties

Despite what Gerald alleges, John did not shirk his military responsibilities. In fact, he built castles (at Lismore, Tybroughney and Ardfinnan) as staging points from which to exploit rivalries between the native dynasties of the Irish south-west. Throughout the 1190s, as he acquired lands in western Normandy, Devon and Cornwall, Glamorgan and Lancashire, John's Irish estate remained central to what he seems deliberately to have conceived of as his own North Sea empire, stretching from Liverpool and Dublin in the north to Montmartin and Mortain on the Norman frontier with Brittany.

In Dublin a great castle was built, its moat and towers still visible beneath the present structure, in its way as great or greater than the contemporary fortifications that the French king, Philip Augustus, was building for himself at the Louvre.

We first read of the Dublin moat in the 1190s, when it was the scene of a murder. In an attack that echoed the killing of Hugh de Lacy, William le Brun, an English colonist, fell into the moat having been struck with an axe by an assassin, presumably an Irishman. Those alleged to have arranged the crime were condemned to defend themselves in trial by battle (fighting one another to the death to prove guilt or innocence). John himself insisted on attending the spectacle.

It was thus in Ireland that John first displayed his well-attested delight in attending judicial duels. It was in Ireland too that he developed his taste for headhunting, collecting the heads of dead enemies as trophies. This was a notorious aspect of warfare among the native Irish that in due course John was to be accused of introducing to his dealings with

A land at war with itself

The Ireland that John first encountered in the 12th century was riven by political factionalism

Twelfth-century Ireland was a fertile land, fully European in terms of trade and Christianity. Its politics, by contrast, remained mired in feuding between the many native Irish sub-kings. These native kings were in turn obliged to keep a watchful eye both on Anglo-Norman realities and upon the Vikings or 'ostmen' settled in Dublin and elsewhere. More broadly, Ireland formed part of a distinct political network, stretching via the Isle of Man to Scotland and thence to the North Sea empires of Norway and Denmark, existing in parallel to the better-known worlds of Anglo-French or papal-German politics.

Ireland was a land where power could be achieved only by playing off one enemy against another. Henry's II expedition of 1171–72 allowed him to impose his authority over Richard 'Strongbow', an Anglo-Norman baron who for the past few years had exploited feuding between the native Irish kings to seize power in the former kingdom of Leinster, the region stretching from Dublin southwards to the ports of Wexford and Waterford. The king spent Christmas 1171 in a great wooden

hall specially built outside Dublin. There he is said to have feasted on roast crane. But in April 1172, after barely six months, Henry II departed his new colony, never to return.

From the beginning, this was a settlement founded upon bloodshed and expropriation. As in England after the conquest of 1066, colonisers were massively outnumbered by natives. But by contrast to Anglo-Saxon England, Ireland remained a land deeply divided between warring sub-kingdoms. It lacked anything comparable to the administrative sophistication of the Anglo-Saxons. Nor had the Irish themselves suffered the sort of defeat inflicted by the battle of Hastings in 1066 to persuade them of their ultimate doom. There were the seeds here of future violence and paranoia.

"A vast solitude" inhabited by "wild and ferocious barbarians" was how one English monk described Ireland in the 1170s. Even 50 years later, another English visitor reported it as a land divided by "a most evil and dangerous frontier between English and Irish", still only a small part of it established as a "land of peace".



Lismore Castle in County Waterford, one of the fortifications that King John constructed in the 1180s to exploit the rivalries that plagued relations between Irish sub-kings.

The castle was largely rebuilt in the 19th century







Traveller's tales

Scenes from Topographia Hibernica, Gerald of Wales's hugely influential account of the people and landscape of Ireland. It is believed that the cleric and writer visited Ireland twice: once in 1183 and again, at the command of Henry II, in 1185. He completed Topographia Hibernica in c1188 TOP LEFT: One man murders another with

an axe. At least two high-profile Anglo-Irish colonists - Hugh de Lacy and William le Brun - died in this manner in the late 12th century. Le Brun's killers were forced to fight to the death in battle, while John watched

ABOVE LEFT: An axeman carries another on his back

LEFT: An Irish ritual of kingship. In Gerald's telling of events, the would-be king had sex with a white mare, before the horse was killed and cooked. The king then bathed in its blood, while his followers ate the stew. "The story is for the most part fantasy," says Nicholas Vincent, "one that reveals the way in which the Irish were (unfairly) viewed by their colonial rulers as a barbaric people ripe for conquest"

the natives of Wales. "A hundred heads sent to Dublin," forms part of the bleak report of John's Irish expedition of 1185. It was also in Ireland, among fractious colonial and native elites, that John first learned how to play off one subordinate against another, stirring up tensions that, however useful to him in the short term, were eventually to coalesce into the great baronial rebellion of 1215. As a French chronicler reported of him, after his death, John "set his barons against one another whenever he could; he was very happy when he saw hate between them".

Starved to death

An Irish dimension can be detected even in the greatest of the king's crimes. After his succession to the English throne in 1199, John was to become notorious both for demanding hostages from his barons, and for the mistreatment of the women and children entrusted to his care. Two atrocities in particular were attributed to the king. In 1202, he either murdered or commanded the murder of his young nephew, Arthur of Brittany, deemed a rebellious rival for the throne. In 1210, and as a direct consequence of his second Irish expedition, he imprisoned the wife and son of his former favourite, William de Braose, allowing both mother and son to be starved to death. According to the most detailed report, when their bodies were found, mother and son were locked in a cannibal embrace, Matilda having gnawed away her son's cheeks.

John's acts of violent revenge, although well outside the norms of European chivalry, were all too typical of what he had observed, and apparently admired, of the feuding between native Irish kings. No wonder that in 1210, asked to deliver his sons to John as hostages, Cathal Crobderg, king of Connacht, rode away from John's court and never returned. John's evil reputation rendered him an object of disgust, even among the notoriously bloodthirsty Irish.

The capture of Arthur in 1202, like the hunting down of William de Braose and his faction in 1210, are today remembered as crimes. They might instead have been commemorated as triumphs. In 1210, the king not only expelled the Braoses from Ireland but brought their chief allies to heel, personally besieging and capturing the great De Lacy family fortress of Carrickfergus on the northern shore of Belfast Lough. But what could have been great victories were transformed into public relations disasters by John's cruelty and mistreatment of his prisoners. The disappearance and presumed death of Arthur led directly to the rebellion and French invasion of 1203 in which John lost Normandy and the lion's share of his continental lands. After the seizure of Carrickfergus and the exile of the Braoses and Lacys, we first begin to read of baronial plots to murder or depose the king.

This is hardly surprising. The Lacys and Braoses belonged to a closely intermarried Anglo-Norman elite. Who could blame their cousins and in-laws for wondering which of their sons or daughters might be next on the list of John's high-born murder-victims? In this way, the internecine violence of Ireland

was allowed to infect the English body politic. Even at Runnymede and in the rebellion that followed, many of the more prominent players – Hugh and Walter de Lacy; Giles de Braose, bishop of Hereford; the two William Marshals, father and son – were members of an Anglo-Irish elite conditioned to feuding almost as a way of life. It was the elder William Marshal, Strongbow's successor as Lord of Leinster, who in 1216 offered to carry King John's son, the young Henry III, to safety in Ireland "on my own back, if needs be!"

From King John to Mr Gladstone, and from Home Rule to Brexit, Ireland has posed many questions that the English have not found easy to answer. It is perhaps time that we recognised John for what he truly was: the one and only king of England first trained in kingship in Ireland. The problem for his subjects was not that John failed to organise effective lordship for the Irish. Rather, John was too Irish for his French or English subjects to bear.

Nicholas Vincent is professor of medieval history at the University of East Anglia. His book *John: An Evil King?* is due to be published by Allen Lane in 2020. You can read Nicholas's piece on a 13th-century 'Brexit' on page 61

DISCOVER MORE

LISTEN AGAIN

▶ To listen to Melvyn Bragg discuss Magna Carta on the 800th anniversary of its sealing, go to bbc.co.uk/ programmes/b04y6wdt

NKNOWN WOMAN WEARING A HAT BY ISAAG OLIVEB. G.1590-5. BOYAL COLLECTION TRUST / ◎ HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN ELIZABETH

ELIZABETHANS

IN MINIATURE



A c1600 image of an unknown woman wearing a hat, by Isaac Oliver

A collection of pocket-sized paintings – most no bigger than the lid of a jam jar – form a major new exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. Art historians **Elizabeth Goldring** and **Catharine MacLeod** tell us what five of these works reveal about 16th-century tastes and the artists who popularised a unique form

WORDS BY CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

Emerging confidence

Self-portrait, aged 30

by Nicholas Hilliard, 1577

One of the most prominent artists of the 16th century, Nicholas Hilliard trained as a goldsmith before turning to miniature painting. His talent was clear and by around 1571, aged about 24, he had become miniature painter to Elizabeth I, creating exquisitely detailed portraits of the queen and well-known courtiers such as Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

"Miniature portraits served a similar function to that of photography," says Elizabeth Goldring. "Their diminutive size meant they could be placed in a locket or carried around as a visual reminder of a loved one."

In 1576, Hilliard travelled to France to serve as court painter

to the Duke of Anjou, youngest son of Henry II of France and Catherine de Medici.

"This likeness, painted in France, reveals how Hilliard viewed himself and how he wished to be seen by others," says Goldring. "Painters in England at this time were generally viewed as no more than manual labourers, but Hilliard's self-portrait demonstrates a growing confidence in his own social and intellectual status as an artist. His imperious gaze and fine clothing are not a million miles away from those of the aristocratic patrons he was painting. Its message is clear: here is a man who is going places."





Wedded bliss

Alice Hilliard

by Nicholas Hilliard, 1578

Before he left for France in 1576, Hilliard married Alice Brandon, daughter of the goldsmith to whom he had been apprenticed for most of the 1560s. Hilliard spent more than two years at the French court, but was joined at some point by his wife – the couple's first child was born in 1578. Before or just after she gave birth, Alice returned to England, six to eight months prior to her husband. This portrait was painted shortly before she departed.

"This exquisite painting of Alice depicts her either in the final stages of pregnancy, or as a new mother," says Goldring. "It's likely Hilliard painted the portrait as a reminder of his wife while they were apart – and she, too, probably returned to England with her husband's self-portrait.

"The painting is full of symbolism: the head of wheat on Alice's bodice indicates fertility, while the carnation was a traditional symbol of marriage. Hilliard's signature (above both shoulders), which previously consisted of an 'N' superimposed over an 'H', now includes an extra diagonal stroke, creating two back-to-back 'A's – one, perhaps, for 'Alice', and the other, possibly, for 'amour'."

ALICE HILLIARD BY HILLIARD - ALIC SELF-PORTRAIT BY NICHOLAS HILL



by Nicholas Hilliard, c1600

As well as works for high status patrons, Hilliard also painted miniatures of now-unidentified men and women. His services, however, were not cheap – a miniature by Hilliard cost £3, the annual wage for an architect in Chester at this time.

"It's no accident that Hilliard enjoyed a near 50-year career," comments Goldring. "As seen in this miniature, which stands in stark contrast to his more formal portraits, he constantly adapted his style to meet the demands of his sitters, so his paintings were rarely, if ever, out of fashion.

"This painting, with its erotic overtones, portrays a man in a state of semi-undress. Flames of love lick at the sitter's head and torso as he turns a jewelled locket towards his heart, perhaps containing a miniature portrait of his beloved."

The dotted outline beneath the portrait shows its actual size - just 6.9cm by 5.4cm. (The other portraits in this feature are not shown in actual size.)

Age laid bare

Elizabeth I

by Isaac Oliver, c1589

Hilliard was not without competition in the miniature market. Born in France around 1565, Isaac Oliver studied under Hilliard but went on to become his main rival.

Elizabeth I saw distributing miniatures as a relatively inexpensive and easy way of currying favour with her courtiers. Around 1589, Oliver was given a commission to create an updated image of the queen that could be used as a general template for future miniatures.

"Official patterns or templates

meant Elizabeth wasn't required to sit for every painting made of her," says Catherine MacLeod. "Hilliard had produced a pattern of the queen in c1584 that had been in use for several years.

"Oliver's proposed template does not appear to have gained Elizabeth's approval – perhaps due to his all-too-realistic depiction of the ageing queen – with sunken eyes, hooked nose and furrowed brow. As far as we know, Oliver was never asked to paint the queen again."





◀ The mask of youth

Elizabeth I

by Nicholas Hilliard, c1595 1600

In around 1592, Hilliard was asked to create a template image of Elizabeth I, who was fast approaching her 60th birthday. "Nevertheless," says Goldring, "the image he created shows none of the physical problems we know she was suffering at this point in her reign – black teeth, wrinkled grey skin and thinning hair. Instead, Hilliard created an ageless image of Elizabeth I (left), which became known as 'the mask of youth'."

This image (one of several surviving examples of, and variations on, Hilliard's 'mask of youth' template, in use from c1592) demonstrates many of the artistic techniques Hilliard became famous for – in particular the queen's crisp white ruff, created by layering white pigment in varying thicknesses.

"Hilliard developed several techniques that made his paintings appear highly lifelike," says Goldring. "But he was reluctant to share his secrets, preferring instead to attribute his incredible skills to God-given talent."

Elizabeth Goldring is honorary associate professor at the University of Warwick.

Catharine MacLeod is senior curator of 17th-century portraits at the National Portrait Gallery

DISCOVER MORE

EXHIBITION

▶ Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver is on show at the National Portrait Gallery until 19 May npg.org.uk/whatson/elizabethan-treasures

BOOK

▶ Nicholas Hilliard: Life of an Artist by Elizabeth Goldring (Yale, 2019)

THE WEAPON THAT MADE MEDICINE

Most of us know chemotherapy as a treatment of many different forms of cancer, but fewer of us may be aware of its battlefield origins

ould you like to leave behind a life-saving legacy? Gifts pledged in Wills fund more than a third of Cancer Research UK's vital work, helping to make it the largest independent cancer researcher worldwide, researching more than 200 cancer types. Thanks in part to the power of pledges, Cancer Research UK has helped cancer survival double over the past 40 years. As an example of its historical innovation, discover how the charity transformed mustard gas from a lethal weapon to a mainstream treatment.



During the 1930s, as World War II loomed, many feared the mustard gas attacks that had first ravaged troops in Ypres in 1917. Medical records of soldiers affected by mustard gas revealed a low number of white blood cells. If these cells mutate, they can go on to form cancers like leukaemia and lymphoma. Researchers hypothesised that if mustard gas could kill white blood cells, maybe it could also be adapted to kill cancer cells. They treated a patient with cancer with nitrogen mustard in 1942, and with each dose he improved, managing to sleep, swallow and eat, until eventually his pain faded. This discovery was the start of what we now know as chemotherapy.



THE BREAKTHROUGH

In 1948, Professor Alexander Haddow produced ground-breaking research, funded by one of the charities that later became Cancer Research UK, showing that parts of the nitrogen mustard molecule could kill cancer cells. He also made it less toxic and more potent against cancer. Nitrogen mustard-derived chemotherapy is still sometimes used today.

In the 1970s, most cancers were treated with surgery followed by radiotherapy. Some patients received chemotherapy, but there were few useful drugs available. Haddow's research has since led to more treatments that have transformed the outlook for many types of cancer.

TODAY'S TREATMENTS

Today's cancer drugs, such as Cisplatin and Carboplatin, work in a similar way to the mustard gas, and are largely responsible for the fact that 98% of men with testicular cancer now survive the disease for 10 years or more. But chemotherapy is just one way to treat cancer. Cancer Research UK continues to play a huge part in developing more targeted treatments, such as immunotherapy, which switches on your own defences against cancer. When you pledge to leave a gift in your Will, you'll be helping to fund the development of new treatments. Cancer Research UK receives no government funding, so that's why gifts left in Wills are so important.

To find out more or to request a free Gifts in Wills guide, visit **cruk.org/pledge** or call 0800 035 9000





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hat are the first
things we do when
we move into a new
house? We immediately set about
stamping on to
it our tastes and
our identity. We redecorate, organise the
furniture and methodically arrange our

furniture and methodically arrange our books – the carefully collected volumes that we hope say something about us and our lives. This, and the frenzy of cleaning and scrubbing that precedes it, is about much more than personal taste and domestic hygiene. It is also an attempt to exorcise from our new private space the lingering presence of its past residents. In order to make the empty frame of an old house into a new home, we attempt to disguise an unavoidable truth: that until recently it was the home of other people, and before them yet more people, a line of strangers stretching back decades and sometimes centuries.

Our homes – the most private and intimate spaces in our lives, and the most expensive material objects we ever purchase – are, in some ways, things we can never truly own. Because, whatever it might say on the deeds, there's no escaping the reality that we are merely the latest characters to appear on stage for an inevitably short cameo. People live for decades. Houses last for centuries. We are just passing through, and no matter how many layers of paint we slap on, or how many changes and alterations we make, we can never quite succeed in wiping away the traces of the lives that have been lived before us.

Some people find it unsettling to think too deeply about this, but there are others who have no desire to exorcise their home of its former owners and tenants and instead seek to commune with them. The television series A House Through Time, which I present on BBC Two, has tapped into that phenomenon, and perhaps played a small part in accelerating it. What the series demonstrates is that, for some homes, it is possible to excavate from the archives a full genealogy, a list stretching back in time of everyone who has ever lived there. The team behind the series uses deeds, land registry documents, wills, tax records, maps (lots of maps), business directories, the national census, local and national newspapers, birth and death certificates to build what is in effect the family tree of a single house. Fans of the series are fascinated by that process of historical detective work, and moved by the human stories that tumble out of the documents.

So many people were captivated by the stories of the former residents of 62 Falkner Street – the beautiful townhouse in Liverpool's Georgian quarter, featured in

the first series of *A House Through Time*– that it has become an unofficial addition to Liverpool's list of tourist attractions. An endless stream of selfies taken by people who watched the series appeared on social media within days of transmission. Some people apparently took day trips to Liverpool specifically to see the house.

The history of one's home is becoming a new form of popular genealogy. People who have already traced their families back through the generations and the centuries are now turning their attention to their homes. They want to commune with the ghosts of past owners and residents, to discover their names and something about their lives.

Chilling discoveries

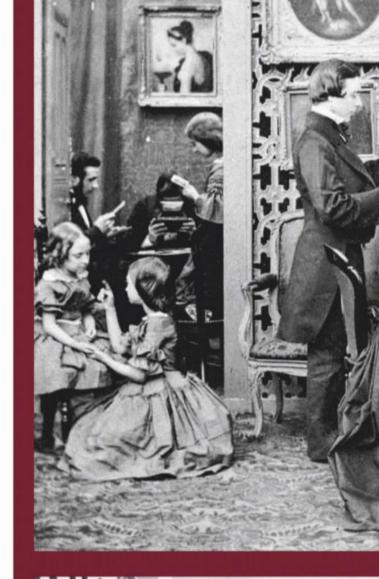
What those looking for the histories of their homes quickly discover is that, while the architectural history of our homes is fascinating, it is the flesh and blood stories of the former residents that really matters. The house, and its physical fabric, is the tangible link we have to them, but our true connection is a human one. What did our home mean to them? What role did it play in their lives? Were they happy within its four walls, or did misfortune overtake them? What scenes played out in the rooms we now call our own?

Every house not only has a chain of former residents; it is also, inevitably, the site of a string of dramas and tragedies. We don't have to go far back into our national past to find ourselves in an age where births, and also deaths, took place at home rather than in hospitals. That's a fact that leads many house historians to chilling discoveries.

And our homes need not be centuries old for them to be the repositories of such dramas. We only have to go back 75 years still within living memory – to meet people for whom homes were not just personal spaces but the refuges where they sheltered from German bombs. Hundreds of thousands of homes were destroyed in the Blitz. Many houses carry the scars of bomb damage today. Those shrapnel marks and patches of repaired brickwork, combined with the documents in the archives, can transport us back to the nights when former residents cowered inside steel Morrison shelters in what are now our living rooms, or huddled together in Anderson shelters dug into our gardens.

Anderson shelters dug into our gardens.

That most tantalising of questions – "Who lived in my house during the war?" – can be one of the easiest to answer, as in 1939 the government carried out a national register of every home in England and Wales. It was used to organise the issuing of identity cards and ration books, but eight decades later this special, one-off census provides us with a snapshot of Britain at the start of the conflict.







LEFT: Songs at the piano in a 19th-century household ABOVE: David Olusoga outside 62 Falkner Street, the subject of the first series of *A House Through Time* BELOW: Furniture and belongings piled up on a London street after an air raid in September 1940. Thousands of homes carry the scars of the Blitz today

Many homes were not just personal spaces but the refuges where people cowered from the Blitz

As such, it carries the names of most of the 43,000 people who were to be killed in the Blitz, and lists most of the addresses that would not appear on the first postwar census. The comparatively easy, online exercise of looking up who was living in our homes in 1939 can be the gateway to deeper research.

Townhouse to flophouse

In the same way that the history of a house is much more than the architectural history of the building itself, the story of any single dwelling is something that spills out into the surrounding streets. The history of any individual address is intimately wrapped up in the history of the neighbourhood where it stands – then, as now, it is 'location, location, location' that counts. Both 62 Falkner Street in Liverpool, the house in the first series of A House Through Time, and 5 Ravensworth Terrace in Newcastle, the subject of the second series, are homes whose place on the ladder of respectability and desirability has changed over time. The latter was built in the 1820s for Newcastle's booming merchant classes, who were keen to escape the noise and pollution of the overcrowded quayside area. Yet by the early 20th century, it was a lodging house in an area that had fallen out of fashion and into neglect, outdone in the desirability stakes by the emergence of newer and swankier Victorian suburbs situated ever further away from Newcastle's heavy industries.

It is these rises and falls, these shifts in the fortunes of neighbourhoods and whole cities, that make the histories of individual houses so fascinating. The economic cycle, combined with the coming of the railways and the expansion of city boundaries, condemned once fashionable districts to precipitous declines. They became urban twilight zones, and houses designed for wealthy families were subdivided into lodging houses or tenements. The pattern was so common that foreign visitors to Victorian and Edwardian Britain noted with surprise that the poor lived, packed sardine-like, in elegant homes originally designed for the rich. And it didn't

A new Victorian railway line could condemn to decay any streets on the 'wrong side of the tracks'

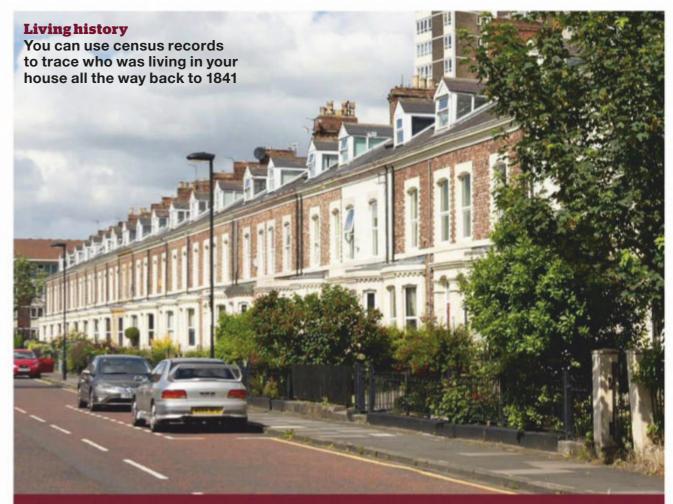
take much for a once desirable residence in a formerly fashionable area to become a flophouse. A new railway line cutting across a Victorian city, for example, could condemn the streets on one side of the line to decay and degeneration. Literally on the wrong side of the tracks, such areas spiralled ever downwards — and this was only one of the mechanisms by which houses built for the rich became the homes of the poor.

Material wealth

What this means is that even some of the country's grander Georgian and Victorian townhouses have humbler chapters in their pasts. Without giving too much away, the history of 5 Ravensworth Terrace begins as you might imagine, with lawyers and doctors – men of means for whom the house is a symbol of social status and material wealth. A century later, the address had little cachet. For those who lived in its rooms – as it was, by then, a lodging house favoured by Tyneside's Irish community – it was not a 'des res', but simply a place to pass through.

What the two series of *A House Through Time* demonstrate, I hope, is something many historians are well aware of: that looking at the past through a highly particular and often narrow aperture can open up, counterintuitively, into a broadened and enhanced picture of the past. The history of a single life, a single year, or, in this case, a single house, can be unexpectedly wide-ranging.

The new series follows the story wherever the lives of the residents take us – to art galleries and factories, abandoned docks, faded seaside retreats, cemeteries hundreds of miles away, and even to one of the battlefields of the American Civil War. The best historical biographies do exactly the same. As well as allowing us into the inner lives of their subjects, they also take us into the worlds they moved within and introduce us to the tensions and obsessions of the age. The makers of *Who Do You Think You Are?* have been pulling off the same trick for 15 years, following leads and exploring the surprising hinterlands they take us into.



How to research your home's history

Sarah Williams, editor of *Who Do You Think You Are?* magazine, offers advice to budding historical house detectives

The history of a house is as much about its past inhabitants as its bricks and mortar. As David mentions, if your house predates 1939, you should be able to find who was living in it at the outbreak of the Second World War because a register was taken to provide the nation with identity cards and ration books. Next, use census records to trace who was living in your home from 1911 and all the way back, in 10-year increments, to 1841.

The 1939 register and census records are available on subscription websites findmypast.co.uk and ancestry.co.uk and may be free to access at your local library. To fill in any gaps, you can use electoral rolls, phone books and even rate books and land tax records, all of which are

gradually being added to these websites.

Historic maps are also increasingly going online. The National Library of Scotland has put online OS maps from across the UK (maps.nls.uk), while there are local projects such as Know Your Place (kypwest.org.uk) for the west of England. For old photographs, try historicengland.org.uk or visit your local record office and see if they can help; they may also have building plans. Always check an archive's website before you visit, as they often have guides to their resources and you may need to order some records in advance.

For more house genealogy advice, go to whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com

Yet while I understand all of this in principle, I am still struck by the fact that so many people turned on their TVs and laptops last year to spend four hours with figures from the past who were neither famous nor exceptional. A House Through Time presented the viewer with a string of individual lives, a collection of strangers who had nothing to link them together other than their connection to a single house in a single British city.

Why did this journey into the past – something that on paper seems so pedestrian and (literally) domestic – prove so popular and so emotionally engaging? If pushed for an answer I'd say that, when it comes to the big things – life and death, birth, marriages, childhood, love and loss, hope and despair –

the lives of others become universal. We recognise the parallels with our own lives and our own families. And when arranged into a family tree or the history of a single house, they remind us of our place in a longer story. And that we are just passing through.

David Olusoga is a historian and broadcaster. His books include *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (Macmillan, 2016)

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TV

➤ The four-part series **A House Through Time**, presented by
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ALAMY





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THE SUCCESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES PROVES THAT WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER

he 5th May this year will mark 100 years since the foundation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The British Red Cross was one of the five founding members, alongside the French, American, Italian and Japanese Red Cross Societies.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent movement initially focused on supporting the sick and wounded in wartime, but the end of WWI saw many national societies also take on a peacetime role. The new League of Red Cross Societies (as it was then known) was designed to help coordinate international peacetime Red Cross humanitarian support. In the

words of the League's original founding Articles of Association, it was created to enable collaboration 'in the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering'. Today the IFRC comprises 190 individual National Societies, ensuring there is a worldwide network of on-the-ground volunteers ready for when disaster strikes.

The British Red Cross has always been an important partner of the IFRC. The beginnings of its own peacetime humanitarian work are closely linked to the founding of the original League. In fact, the charity provided the League's first Director General, Sir David Henderson, and the Supplemental Royal Charter of

December 1919 explicitly recognised the right of the British Red Cross to support peacetime first aid and disaster relief work.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

The work carried out by the British Red Cross is as essential today as it was in 1919. It's thanks to the generosity of the charity's supporters that it can always be ready to help those in crisis, whether they're on the other side of the world or on your own street.

By leaving a gift in your will, you can leave your own legacy and ensure the British Red Cross can continue to support vulnerable people – for the next 100 years and beyond.





Margaret of York, the sister of Kings Edward IV and Richard III, prays before the Cathedral of St Gudula in Brussels. Women of Margaret's status were expected to be literate, able to manage complex estates and even command a castle garrison

THE PRINCESSES WHO PACKED A PUNCH

Medieval England's royal women had the power to shape the world around them, and they weren't afraid to use it

By Kelcey Wilson-Lee

leanor of Woodstock, Edward II's eldest daughter, was 24 years old when she stripped herself nearly naked before the dignitaries gathered at her husband Reginald II's palace. The year was 1342, and the young Duchess of Guelders had been absent from Reginald's court (in Nijmegen, the modern-day

Netherlands) for months – banished to a house on the other side of the city on the pretext of suspected leprosy. Eventually, rumours spread to the English princess that Reginald was planning to divorce her on the grounds of her supposed illness. A divorce would ruin Eleanor financially, threaten her two sons' inheritance, and rupture one of England's most critical military partnerships in its war with France. But Eleanor knew she had the power to stop it.

Reasoning that the swiftest way to silence her accusers would be an unequivocal demonstration of her health, Eleanor gathered her young sons and travelled unannounced to the ducal palace, the Valkhof, on a day she knew Reginald's court would be filled with witnesses. Ushering her children before their father, she dramatically cast off her mantle to reveal a tunic of the flimsiest silk – through which her unblemished skin was apparent to all.

The chronicler William of Berchen reported that the duchess challenged anyone present to examine her for "the bodily affliction of which I am thoughtlessly accused". She also declared: "I know that this threat to our marriage has stemmed from malicious slander."

The young princess evidently made quite an impression: the scene Berchen described was popular in Dutch engravings as late as the 19th century, often depicting the semi-nude princess throwing her head back with wild abandon.

But behind the theatre and the titillation of Eleanor's gesture lies a question: why was Reginald so determined to cast off his wife?

From a distance of 700 years, it doesn't appear that Reginald genuinely believed his wife had leprosy – if that had been the case, he sure-

ly would have blocked any contact between his sons and their afflicted mother. And this was a marriage that, in its early years, had appeared a great blessing to Reginald: Eleanor's vast dowry of 10,000 pounds greatly enriched his coffers; the English princess provided her older husband with two healthy sons; and when, in 1339, Reginald was made a duke, he largely had his union with Eleanor to thank for his elevation. In short, the Duke of Guelders' motivation for ostracising his royal wife appears scant.

But motivation there was, and it may have been the product of a widely ignored phenomenon – one that contemporary histories barely acknowledged but that had a transformational impact on court politics and international diplomacy. That phenomenon was the power of royal women.

The power of princesses to shape the world around them has largely been forgotten. One of the reasons for this is that women are almost invisible in the major national chronicles that have for centuries provided the foundation on which histories have been written. When their names do appear, it is most often only to record which leading nobleman or foreign potentate had been linked to the king through their marriage. More detailed or personal accounts of women's exploits were even more rare — only written down in instances deemed particularly memorable or dramatic, as Eleanor's act of defiance at the Valkhof palace undoubtedly was.

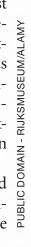
ut women's absence from the written record shouldn't be mistaken for an absence of power. I have been researching the princesses of medieval England for a biography of Edward I's five daughters (Eleanor's aunts, although she could only have known two of them), and what became clear early in my research was that Eleanor and her peers were required to be so much more than the submissive stereotype popularised by fairytales. Not for them was the passive acquiescence of Rapunzel in her tower or the serenity of Sleeping Beauty as she awaited rescue by Prince Charming. Instead, the roles they played within political and social structures were dynamic, active and empowered.

This is not to deny the deep misogyny at the heart of medieval culture, which saw most women deprived of legal autonomy, and widespread suspicion of the female sex as weak, lust-

ful and changeable. But feudalism, with its emphasis on social status, offered elite women an opportunity to wield influence – economic, political and cultural – that far exceeded most of their contemporaries, even aristocratic men.

Far from being meek pawns to be traded in marriage by their fathers without consultation, many English royal women in the

A rocky relationship: Eleanor of Woodstock with her husband, Reginald II of Guelders



The norm among the famous princesses of fiction was to be seen but not heard, but their historic counterparts knew their proximity to the king gave them a voice



An 18th-century engraving shows Eleanor of Woodstock stripping semi-naked to demonstrate to her husband's court that she was not suffering from leprosy. The English princess's decision to disrobe was bold, theatrical and mightily effective

medieval period participated in their own marriage negotiations. There were adolescents like 12-year-old Eleanor, eldest daughter of Edward I, who in 1282 dictated a letter in her own name affirming her desire to marry. Calling herself "the eldest child of the illustrious King of England", Eleanor dispatched an official embassy to Aragon to contract a marriage "between us and a man of glory, Prince Alfonso, eldest child and heir of the illustrious King of Aragon", confirming both her own consent to the match and that of her parents.

Whereas the norm among the famous princesses of fiction – like good Victorian children – was to be seen but not heard, their historic counterparts knew their proximity to the king gave them a voice. At the royal court, these women advocated forcefully (and with considerable success) on behalf of favourite causes and to secure promotions for friends and loyal servants. Meanwhile, those who married abroad used the considerable power of the English king to advance the interests of their new home. Their letters back to England were full of familial warmth, turning the knife of emotion – even when they were writing on matters of business, securing more favourable trading partnerships or requesting that English privateers be held accountable for unlicensed raids against merchants.

Eleanor's aunts, Margaret, Duchess of Brabant, and Elizabeth, Countess of Holland, both wrote regularly to their father, Edward I, on behalf of the business interests that fuelled their mercantile countries, often with favourable results. And many, like Eleanor in the early years of her marriage to Reginald in Guelders, promoted military collaborations that supported English aims to expand an empire across Britain and into France.

or women to play these roles was neither unexpected nor discouraged. Contemporary treatises, such as Christine de Pisan's *Treasure of the City of Ladies* and Geoffrey de la Tour Landry's *Book of the Knight of the Tower*, make clear that 14th-century aristocratic women were expected to be effective in managing complex estates, deploying patronage to increase their influence, and even commanding a castle garrison. In the event her husband was captured or died, a royal woman might be required to govern, acting as regent to safeguard her own interests and the inheritance of her children. Princesses knew they could not afford to shy away from such responsibilities; in Christine de Pisan's words, a princess "should conduct herself with such skill that she may be feared as well as loved".

The significant demands on royal women required more than a knowledge of embroidery, hunting and romance. To succeed as a regent, princesses had to be literate: they predominately read in the Anglo-Norman French that was the mother tongue of English royals



A king and queen are enthroned at Westminster Abbey in a 14th-century manuscript. Intercession – the art of using privileged access to husbands and fathers to win favour – was a powerful tool in a royal woman's armoury

Dramatic episodes involving royal women were not unusual. Medieval princesses got married in secret, engaged in high-stakes power plays, and fell prey to gambling addictions

until the late medieval period, although they also learned some Latin gleaned from recitation of devotional texts like the psalms. They studied basic arithmetic from a young age, while absorbing much about the management of courtiers and administrators from watching their mothers and grandmothers in action.

Young women needed to master the social conventions by which they might wield authority in heavily patriarchal medieval society. Most often, this education was passed down from mother to daughter, and supplemented by tuition from aristocratic governesses and other ladies charged with attending the princess.

But perhaps the most important factor determining a medieval princess's success was her ability to perfect the art of intercession – that is, using privileged access to husbands and fathers to win favours. This skill was passed on largely by example. It was also learned from religious models such as the Virgin Mary – the ultimate intercessor, whose position seated at the right hand of Christ on the day of judgment afforded unique opportunities to plead with her son on behalf of worthy souls.

By the early 14th century, intercession was accepted as the most effective tool in the princess's armoury. It was soft power, but it was very real. Surviving chancery rolls (in which were recorded the bestowing of royal offices and lands, licences conferred, fines levied and pardons granted) abound with references to actions executed at the request of royal women. As a result of such entreaties, courtiers were rewarded, incomes were enhanced, and murderers were pardoned.

In a well-known example of royal female intercession, Philippa of Hainaut, lauded by the English people for her kindness, persuaded her husband, Edward III, to spare the lives of the Burghers of Calais after the English had seized the city at the height of the Hundred Years' War. In using her emotional link to the king as a powerful bargaining tool, Philippa was far from alone.

Surviving patent rolls detail that, while travelling with her father, Edward I's, army in Scotland in 1304, Joan of Acre convinced the king to pardon Walter Page of Framlington for killing Roger Founyng of Newcastle-on-Tyne. No other records tie Joan to Walter Page; most likely, Page's supporters sought out Joan as a senior royal woman at court and, in recognition of her accepted role as an intercessor, begged her support.

Successful intercession might also bring official recognition: Joan's sister Mary of Woodstock, a nun of Amesbury Priory in Wiltshire, was as a teenager named as a legal representative of the chief abbess of her order in recognition of her ability to argue the abbess's interests directly to her father, the king. Mary was attached to her title; in a request to her father that he help restore lands seized from the priory estate, she concluded: "Do as much, sweet father, for the love of me, that my lady the abbess of Fontevrault may perceive in all things that I am a good attorney for her in this country."

And princesses were just as skilled at influencing their husbands as they were their fathers. Theirs was a mission in stealth diplomacy, in which emotional ties were expected to serve international political aims. The early years of Eleanor's marriage offer an excellent example of success: in providing her husband with heirs, her position was strengthened. The duchess's increased influence in turn bolstered her advocacy for English wool and Plantagenet empire-building at the court in Nijmegen. Eleanor helped win military support for England's wars, and reinforced essential economic ties for its exports.

ut while a princess's distinctive position – her full membership of two ruling families – gave her power, it could also make her a target. As Edward III flexed his muscles on the continent, Reginald's advisors became increasingly wary of their duchess's brother, and – by extension – of Eleanor's influence on their ruler. Rather than a genuine fear that she was infected with leprosy, therefore, the threat to Eleanor's marriage seems likely to have stemmed from anxiety among the duke's inner circle that, through Eleanor's advocacy for the English cause, the small duchy of Guelders might become collateral damage in what would become known as the Hundred Years' War. By 1340, their concern was not unreasonable: Edward III's claim to the French throne might easily have threatened an ally so close to the border with France.

Happily for Eleanor, her decision to take off her clothes in full view of her husband's court paid dividends. The duchess could no longer be sidelined on the pretext of a disease from which she was unmistakably free, and Reginald ceased seeking a divorce. Through her bold and unexpected action, Eleanor was restored to her position at court. Over the following months, she demonstrated her renewed influence by offering patronage to the Franciscan convent in Harderwijk and endowing a new house for that order – a favourite of English royal women since her great-grandmother Eleanor of Provence – at the trading city of Deventer.

Eleanor's brush with nudity in Nijmegen may have inspired generations of artists but it was far from the only episode of high drama involving royal women in the Middle Ages. Medieval princesses got married in secret, engaged in high-stakes power plays, and fell prey to gambling addictions. Though chronicles remain mostly silent on these women, by paying close attention to less well-known sources, they can be uncovered in their vibrancy. What emerges is a new vision of a medieval princess: a woman trained from childhood to excel in cultural, economic and military diplomacy on an international stage. She is not the powerless girl the fairytales would have us believe. She never really was.

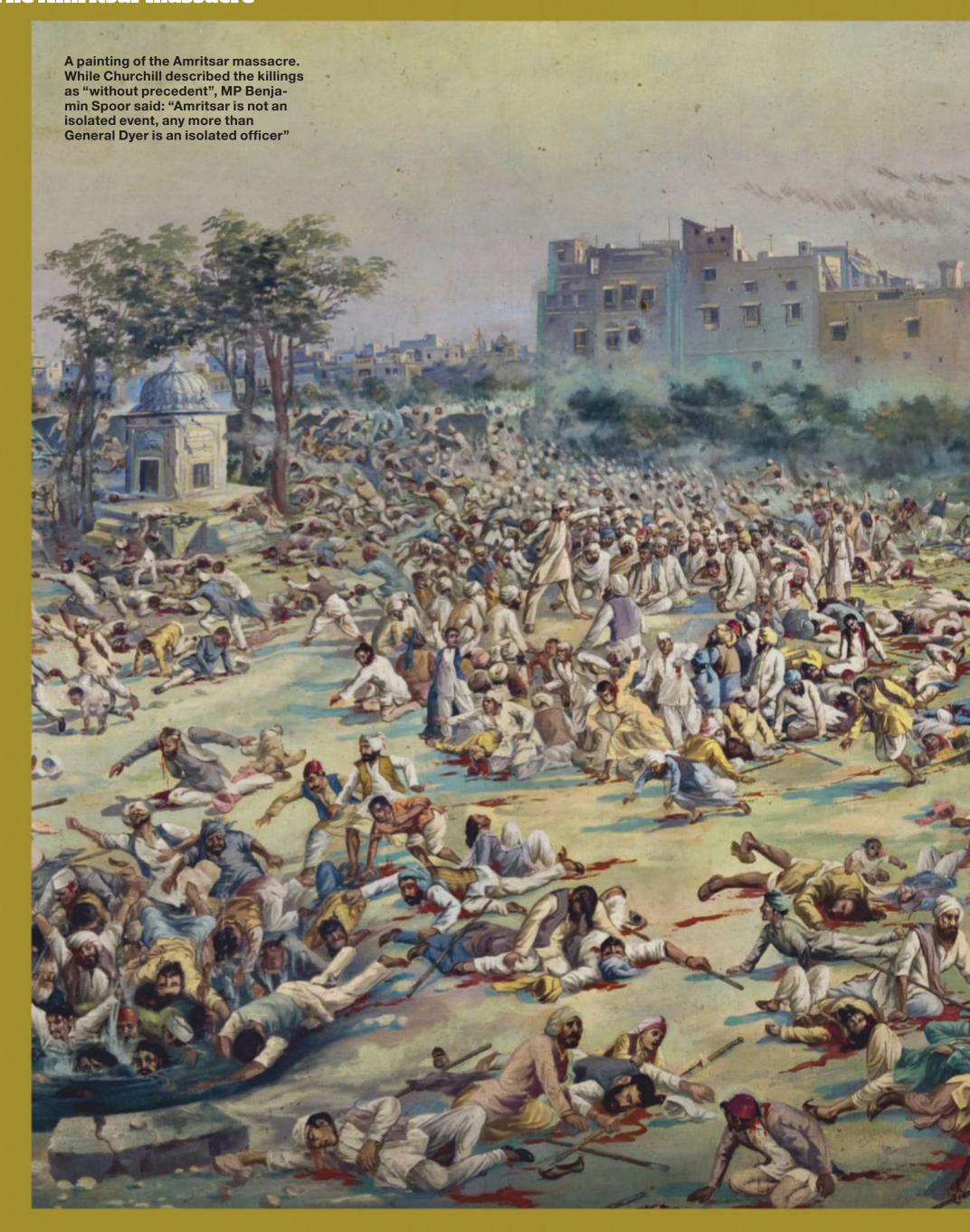
Kelcey Wilson-Lee is a historian and author. Her book *Daughters of Chivalry: The Forgotten Children of Edward I* was published by Picador in March

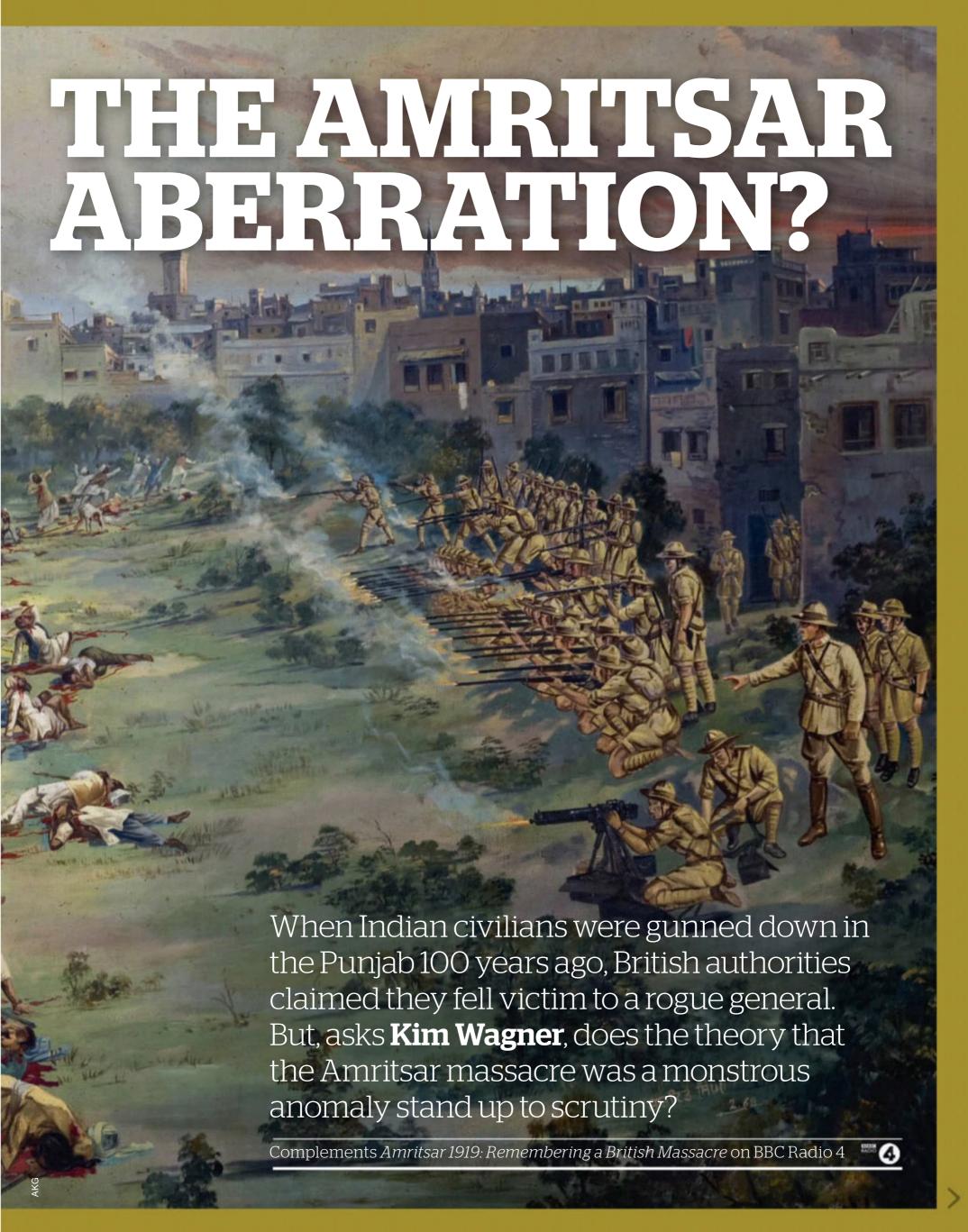
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The Amritsar massacre





ate in the afternoon on Sunday 13 April 1919, the British military commander General REH Dyer entered the city of Amritsar in Punjab in northern India with a strike-force of 90 colonial troops and two armoured cars. A few days earlier, the authorities had arrested and exiled two Indian nationalist leaders. During the ensuing riots, scores of Indian protesters were shot down, while angry crowds killed five Europeans.

The authorities had banned political meetings, and an uneasy calm prevailed when Dyer reached the public space known as Jallianwala Bagh, which was surrounded on all sides by houses and walls. Here, he found himself face to face with a crowd of more than 20,000 people, whom he assumed to be bloodthirsty rebels preparing to overrun the British parts of the city. Within 30 seconds of deploying his troops, and without warning, Dyer gave the order to open fire. From the vantage point of one of the nearby rooftops, an Indian eyewitness watched the ensuing carnage:

"Shots were fired into the thick of the meeting. There was not a corner left of the garden facing the firing line where people did not die in large numbers. Many got trampled under the feet of the rushing crowds and thus lost their lives. Blood was pouring in profusion. Even those who lay flat on the ground were shot, as I saw the Gurkhas kneel down and fire. As soon as the firing stopped, the troops and officers all cleared away."

The shooting lasted for 10–15 minutes. By the time the guns fell silent, Jallianwala Bagh was littered with the bodies of the dead and dying. Although the authorities were never to concede that more than 379 were killed, a more realistic assessment would suggest the death toll was between 500 and 600. The wounded likely amounted to three times as many.

Irreparable damage

Dyer had been disastrously mistaken in his threat assessment. The crowd was not formed of armed rebels but local residents and villagers from the surrounding countryside, who had come to listen to political speeches or simply to spend a few hours in this public space. It was composed of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Most were men and young boys, including some infants. Only a few women were present.

When later called upon to justify his actions, Dyer characterised the situation in Amritsar as a military operation – one with a punitive logic all its own: "I fired and continued to fire until the crowd dispersed, and I consider this is the least amount of

firing which would produce the necessary moral and widespread effect it was my duty to produce if I was to justify my action," he said. "If more troops had been at hand, the casualties would be greater in proportion. It was no longer a question of merely dispersing the crowd; but one of producing a sufficient moral effect, from a military point of view, not only on those who were present but more specially throughout the Punjab. There could be no question of undue severity."

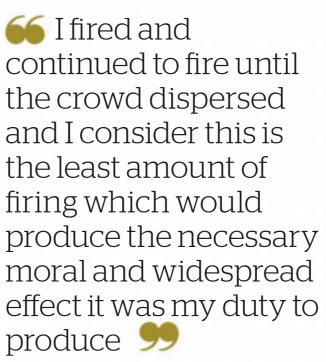
Details of the massacre, and of Dyer's justification, only emerged months later, but caused irreparable damage to the relationship between moderate Indian nationalists, including Gandhi, and the British government. Although many colonial officials and conservatives rallied to Dyer's defence, the general was forced to retire from the army, with the government officially denouncing his actions in 1920. During a debate in the House of Commons, then secretary of war Winston Churchill famously described what happened at Jallianwala Bagh as "an episode which appears to me to be without precedent or parallel in the modern history of the British empire. It is an event of an entirely different order from any of those tragical occurrences which take place when troops are brought into collision with the civil population. It is an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation."

Dyer, in other words, was singled out as

a bad apple, and the massacre itself portrayed as an aberration within an otherwise benign imperial project. Considering that Churchill, just a few months later, initiated the indiscriminate policy of brutal reprisals for IRA attacks in Ireland, and oversaw the violent suppression of unrest elsewhere in the empire, the speech was blatantly disingenuous. It was also, objectively speaking, wrong. Dyer's actions at Jallianwala Bagh on 13 April 1919 were not "without precedent" and nor were they "foreign to the British way of doing things", as Churchill asserted.

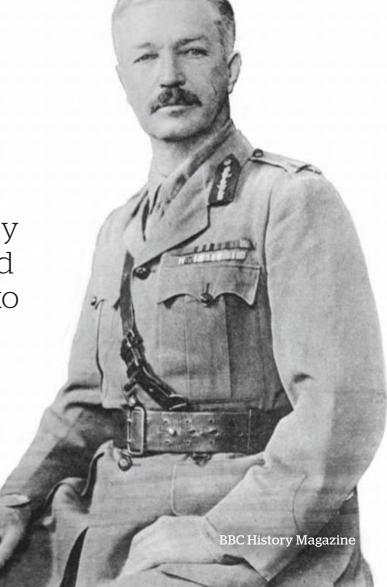
A culture of violence

The assumption that the only language understood by 'natives' was a prompt and forceful response was deeply ingrained in the mindset of colonial officers. The notion of exemplary force harked back to the spectacle of mass executions during the Indian Uprising, or 'Mutiny', of 1857–58, when Indian rebels were executed by being 'blown from guns' – a barbaric practice in which prisoners were tied to the mouths of cannons and blown to pieces. Such rituals of deterrent brutality were entirely indiscriminate, since the guilt of individuals was inferred rather than proven, and ultimately of no real significance to the logic of the colonial violence. For instance, after a regiment of sepoys (Indian infantrymen) killed their officers and deserted in July 1857, the deputy-commissioner of Amritsar, Frederick



GENERAL REH DYER

General Dyer c1919, the year his troops opened fire without warning on a crowd of 20,000 unarmed Indian civilians



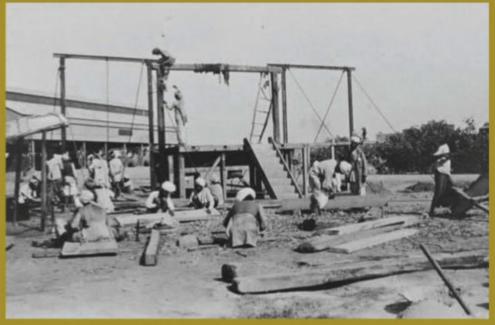
Imperial excesses

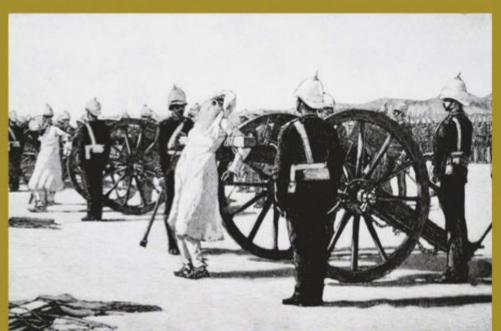
TOP RIGHT: The Sikandar Bagh, Lucknow, where 2,000 Indian rebels were massacred by the British in 1857, half a century before Amritsar. This staged photo from 1858 has skeletons placed on the ground
MIDDLE RIGHT: Gallows are
erected at Kasur in the Punjab, 1919. "Force is the only thing that an Asiatic has any respect for," declared Brigadier-General **Drake-Brockman that same year** BOTTOM RIGHT: **Members of the** Sikh Kuka sect are executed by cannon following unrest in 1872. The prisoners were strapped to the barrels of guns and blown to pieces

BELOW: Jallianwala Bagh, where the Amritsar massacre took place. The shooting lasted for 10–15 minutes and resulted in at least 379 deaths – though the real total was likely far more











A c1860 painting shows fighting during the Indian Uprising. By using exemplary force in 1857–58, did the British set a precedent that resulted in the bloodshed of 1919?

Cooper, pursued them with a force of Sikh conscripts to the banks of the Ravi river. Trapped on an island, the fugitives were either driven into the water, where they drowned, or captured and executed by firing squad. More than 200 were killed in this manner, and some were dragged kicking and screaming to the edge of a nearby empty well, where the corpses were dropped.

When Cooper recalled the massacre of the fugitive sepoys in his memoirs, he did so with an unmistakable sense of achievement, describing "a single Anglo-Saxon, supported by a section of Asiatics, undertaking so tremendous a responsibility, and coldly presiding over so memorable an execution, without the excitement of battle, or a sense of individual injury, to imbue the proceedings with the faintest hue of vindictiveness...

The crime was mutiny, and... the punishment was death."

Cooper here presented an explicitly racialised portrayal, of the embattled colonial officer carrying out his horrible duty in a dispassionate manner, without ever losing his head. This was the proverbial 'stiff upper lip' at its most colonial – and most brutal.

Gloating over death

Not everyone believed that the ruthless slaughter reflected well on British rule in India. William Howard Russell, correspondent for *The Times*, was scathing in his reports, exposing the combination of fear and vengefulness that characterised the attitudes of many imperialists: "I have no sympathy with those who gloat over their death, and who, in the press and elsewhere, fly into ecstasies of delight at the records of each act

of necessary justice... They see no safety, no absolute means of prevention to the recurrence of such alarms, but in the annihilation of every sepoy who mutinied, or who was likely to have done so if he could."

Ultimately, such critical voices had little impact either on official policies or public opinion, mainly because violence and spectacular displays of force were commonly believed to be the most effective means of preserving British control in India.

A few years later, in 1872, an attack on Muslim villages in Punjab by a small group of Sikhs, belonging to the Kuka or Namdhari

Composed as the crowd was of the scum of Delhi city, I am of firm opinion that if they had got a bit more firing given them, it would have done them a world

of good **99 BRIGADIER-GENERAL**

DRAKE-BROCKMAN

Drake-Brockman's response to unrest in the Indian capital in 1919 was typical of sentiments among British colonial officers

sect, sparked fears among the British of a second 'mutiny'. The outbreak was soon quelled and the motley gang of Kukas was taken prisoner by a local Indian ruler in the principality of Malerkotla. It soon became apparent that initial reports of the attacks had been hugely exaggerated, but that didn't prevent a British official, deputy commissioner JL Cowan, proposing that the prisoners be executed immediately: "They are open rebels, offering contumacious resistance to constituted authority, and, to prevent the spreading of the disease, it is absolutely necessary that repressive measures should be prompt and stern... [T]his incipient insurrection must be stamped out at once."

It was no empty promise. Over the following two days, Cowan summarily executed all 65 prisoners by blowing them from guns. Faced with what he perceived to be "an open rebellion", the deputy commissioner had simply followed the example provided by the Uprising 15 years earlier. His chosen mode of execution was considered "a proceeding warranted by former precedents when large numbers of rebels were thus disposed of in 1857".

As soon as details of Cowan's crackdown reached the press and the wider public, a heated debate erupted both in India and in Great Britain, where the affair became a cause for national embarrassment.

The deputy commissioner was removed from his post, but there was substantial support for his actions among the British community in India – in fact, a public collection of funds was later arranged for his benefit. Commenting on Cowan's actions Lord Napier, the commander-in-chief in India, noted: "It is in short obvious [...] that his motive in ordering the executions was



to prevent a rising which he considered imminent, by an act calculated to strike terror into the whole Kuka sect."

This perceived need to nip unrest in the bud before it escalated later assumed the force of doctrine in CE Callwell's classic 1896 military manual *Small Wars: Their Principals and Practice*. One of the key tenets of colonial small wars, as defined by Callwell, was in fact the great principle of "overawing the enemy by bold initiative and resolute action".

A predictable catastrophe?

At Amritsar in April 1919, Dyer had simply followed the example of so many colonial officials before him, who resorted to exemplary and indiscriminate violence when faced with rebellion and anti-colonial unrest. When justifying the mass slaughter of sepoys in 1857, Frederick Cooper described such violence as necessary "to show publicly in the eyes of all men, that, at all events, the Punjab authorities adhered to the policy of overawing, by a prompt and stern initiative (the only way to strike terror into a semibarbarous people), and to the last would brook nothing short of absolute, active and positive loyalty".

Given that these words were almost exactly the same as the ones Dyer spoke in his own defence, it's hard not to conclude that what happened at Jallianwala Bagh was in many ways predictable. "Amritsar is not an isolated event," the Labour MP Benjamin Spoor noted in 1920, "any more than General Dyer is an isolated officer."

Dyer's actions at Jallianwala Bagh did reflect commonly held sentiments among the British officers involved in the suppression of the disturbances in 1919. Following unrest in the colonial capital that same year, Brigadier-General Drake-Brockman openly stated: "Composed as the crowd was of the scum of Delhi city, I am of firm opinion that if they had got a bit more firing given them, it would have done them a world of good and their attitude would be much more amenable and respectful, as force is the only thing that an Asiatic has any respect for."

At Amritsar on 13 April 1919, General Dyer simply pursued this logic to its terrible conclusion.

Kim Wagner teaches the history of colonial India and the British empire at Queen Mary, University of London. His latest book, *Amritsar 1919: An Empire of Fear and the Making of a Massacre*, was published by Yale in February

DISCOVER MORE

RADIO

Zareer Masani's documentary Amritsar1919: Remembering a British

Massacre is due to air on BBC Radio 4 on 10 April



VIEWPOINT

"An apology would be counterproductive"

Saying sorry would do little to heal wounds in the former British empire, argues **Kim Wagner**

The notion of truth and reconciliation is increasingly being invoked to address the legacies of empire. While 'truth' is certainly a good place to start, 'reconciliation' remains a far more problematic concept.

Today, 100 years after the brutal massacre in Jallianwala Bagh, public debate revolves almost entirely around the issue of a formal apology. Though Queen Elizabeth visited the memorial in Amritsar in 1997, followed by prime minister David Cameron in 2013, an actual apology was on both occasions studiously avoided. In December 2017, however, Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, urged the British government to give "the people of Amritsar and India the closure they need through a formal apology".

Although an apology might be personally meaningful to the descendants of the people who were killed or wounded in 1919, most demands are more abstract in nature. Indian politician and author Shashi Tharoor, for instance, has repeatedly emphasised the significance of the Amritsar massacre as the keystone of a British apology for the iniquities of the Raj more generally. A recent online petition to "make Britain apologise" similarly

describes the demand as "an apology which counts for all the wrong doings [that] happened during the British rule".

From a British perspective, however, the official line has always been that the massacre was an isolated event and Dyer a rogue officer. If it were to happen, an apology would therefore only be for the massacre as an unfortunate exception, which did not reflect on the moral legitimacy of the empire. An apology that perpetuated the myth of Dyer as a bad apple would, as a result, most likely be counterproductive, creating new wounds rather than healing old ones.

As a political ritual, formal apologies for historical wrongdoings are essentially about the present rather than the past – reducing complex events to simplistic moral binaries of good and bad, of perpetrators and victims. They are not likely to produce a better understanding of our shared history.

HAVE YOUR SAY

▶ Do you think Britain should apologise for the Amritsar massacre? Let us know at facebook.com/HistoryExtra and twitter.com/HistoryExtra







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BREXII

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

As Britain prepares to **leave the European Union**, five historians consider **previous schisms** – including King John's
misadventures in France and Henry VIII's

break with Rome





Henry VIII invents 'England'

The Tudor king's break with Rome in 1532–33 established the idea of English exceptionalism and paved the way for 2016, argues **David Starkey**

et's put our cards on the table:
there is no doubt whatsoever
that Henry VIII's break from
Rome is not simply a parallel,
it is the direct ancestor of Brexit.
The dispute with Rome was about jurisdiction and the rejection of any foreign authority
within England at a time when Henry,
along with everyone else, was the subject of
the Universal Church of Rome, a pan-European, supranational ancestor of the EU with its
own non-English system of law that covered
whole swathes of public and private life —
including Henry's marriage to Catherine
of Aragon.

Although Henry did want an heir, what really drove him was his lust for Anne Boleyn. His decision to marry her was the Tudor equivalent of the Brexit referendum, a gigantic event that nonetheless had the smallest of motives: love. But it also very quickly became political for Henry, because

he became deeply attached to the idea of not simply being king but head of the church. After all, seeing yourself as direct successor of King David and King Solomon is bound to make you feel good about yourself.

Following humiliations in his efforts to secure a divorce – and after pausing to assemble a think-tank of scholars who worked up arguments to say that Rome had no jurisdiction because Henry, not the pope, was rightful head of the church – it's striking how cunningly Henry proceeded. In his foreign policy he deliberately divided Europe, splitting France from Spain by writing off the equivalent of billions of pounds in reparations owed to England.

Henry also made sure he had a favourable archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, in post. Then, at the last possible minute, Henry passed a key act of legislation, the Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533), which meant that even if poor Catherine appealed to Rome

from Cranmer's rigged court, which in 1533 ruled her marriage to Henry as against the law of God, it would have no application in England. All of this was totally calculated and shows a sense of strategy that puts us to shame. The final step, in 1534, was to protect the king's title as supreme head of the church by the law of treason.

The widest strip of water

The deeper consequence of all of this is that Henry VIII actually invented 'England' – and, remember, we're talking purely about England here. This is why England and Scotland voted differently in the Brexit referendum: because they have had different experiences of the Reformation. The Scots had a European-style Reformation that cemented their ties to continental Europe.

The whole Brexiteer position can be traced back to Henry and the propaganda that followed the break from Rome: that sense of English difference and distinction, of Europe as foreign and strange, and of the Channel as the widest strip of water in the world. Even the concept of parliamentary sovereignty was invented for Henry as a means by which he could bring about a sovereign independent state.

This schism is the foundation of English self-identity, one that ran counter to so many other aspects of English history. From the Norman conquest onwards we were tied to Europe. Before then, we were essentially part of Greater Scandinavia. The Normans pulled us across the Channel, and for most of the Middle Ages we were part of a cross-channel monarchy. The Channel wasn't a barrier, it was an essential means of communication. The Tudors themselves were the result of a French invasion: many of Henry VII's troops at Bosworth were French, the money was French, the ships that brought him over were French and the bloody tactics in the battle were French.

It's astonishing that people have refused to chart this story, and having a better grasp of history would have helped people in the current debates. Henry turned English history around. He created Fortress Britain, because he had to. England became a pariah. What followed was an enormous programme of land fortification and the construction of a new, heavily armoured Royal Navy, but at the same time England invented for itself the concept of empire. What emerged from all of this was Battleship Britain – a kind of embattled island standing proud against the wickedness of Europe – but also an island that looked outwards across unknown waters.

David Starkey is a historian and broadcaster. In 2017, he presented *Reformation: Europe's Holy War* on BBC Two

King John is booted out of Normandy

Nicholas Vincent charts the aftermath of England's defeats on the continent in 1204

n the eve of the feast day of
St Nicholas, 6 December 1203,
King John's galley slipped
anchor from Barfleur at
Normandy's northernmost tip.
Normandy itself was in open rebellion.
Within six months, the ducal capital at Rouen
and the greatest of the king's castles north of
the Loire all surrendered to French invasion.
After nearly 140 years of rule by Frenchspeaking kings, John's English subjects were
about to experience their own version of
Brexit, the gravest breach in Anglo-European
relations since the Norman conquest of 1066.

What came to be known as King John's 'loss of Normandy' in 1204 provoked political crisis. A king who had previously been an absentee defending his lands in France now roamed England in search of money and manpower with which to win back his lost continental estate. Henceforth the ambitions of King John and his French-speaking courtiers diverged fundamentally from those of the majority of his barons to whom, despite their French ancestry, France was already a distant place.

This basic divide was to inflect political history for the next 50 years, as John and his son, Henry III, squandered the wealth of England in doomed attempts at reconquest. One such attempt, in 1214, from which John

once again slunk back defeated, led directly to rebellion and civil war in 1215–17. Here, for a while, an army commanded by the future French king Louis VIII ruled over London and the home counties. The irony is that native baronial resistance to the king of England's foreign adventures led to an alliance between English barons and the king of France. As late as the 1290s, the insistence by John's grandson, Edward I, upon taxing the English to pay for wars in France provoked a series of baronial rebellions or standoffs.

Surrogate theatres

What of the economic effects upon England? Trade was disrupted, sporadically rather than permanently, but with sufficient negative effect to persuade the Londoners, after one

"John slunk back defeated from France in 1214. The result was rebellion and the civil war of 1215-17" such disruption in 1214, to side with the barons and their French allies. The effects were felt on both sides of the Channel.

Archbishop Odo of Rouen, touring his diocese in the 1250s, reported how church after church had fallen into disrepair as the wealth that had previously flowed from Anglo-Norman alignment ceased to flow. For the inhabitants of Scotland, Wales and Ireland – used by English monarchs as surrogate theatres for continental adventures – the effects were catastrophic.

There were positive as well as a negative consequences. Great Britain was itself first forged in the wars the English now waged in the rest of the British Isles. The baronial rebellion of 1215 produced Magna Carta, albeit as a manifesto of future good government rather than as a practical solution to the problems of John's bad kingship. The universities of Oxford, and in due course Cambridge, educated an intellectual elite who might previously have gone to Paris or Bologna. John presided over the building of a royal navy. But these were unintended outcomes of what no one was in any doubt was King John's most shameful defeat.

Nicholas Vincent is professor of medieval history at the University of East Anglia. To read his feature on King John, turn to page 26



A Roman mosaic depicts a man carrying crops in the third century AD, when Britain was a key exporter of grain to the rest of the empire

Britannia goes it alone

In 286, Rome lost control of Britain, but the ensuing Britannic empire didn't endure more than a decade, writes **Andrew Brown**

he 280s AD found the Roman empire in trouble, seriously destabilised in the west by the external threat of raiding Germanic 'barbarians' – Saxons, Franks and Frisians. The outlook in Britain seems to have been brighter, though. As a key exporter of grain to the continent and with a booming agricultural economy, the province off mainland Europe's north-west corner appears to have been regarded as something of a safe haven. To repel seaborne attack, the Romans built defensive fortifications on both sides of the English Channel. A surge in villa-building seems to have been linked to the movement of wealthy Gallic and Romano-British populations to the relative calm of southern Britannia.

Yet by the end of the decade, Britain too had been pitched into deep crisis – one that caused the province to break away from the Roman empire and attempt to go it alone.

The trouble began when Maximian, emperor in the west, appointed a young general, Marcus Aurelius Mauseus Carausius, to command the northern fleet in Gaul and Britain and stabilise the prized trade routes between Britain and the Rhine.

Carausius was an astute general who reinforced coastal fortifications and strengthened the navy. But soon (perhaps due to self-aggrandisement or embezzling captured loot), he had fallen out with Maximian, and found himself sentenced to death. Carausius had no intention of going down without a fight: on learning of his fate, he usurped Roman authority and declared himself emperor.

After several months of campaigning on

the continent, Carausius was forced to retreat to Britannia. His Britannic empire at times included territory in northern Gaul, notably Boulogne, but its heartland was Britain and London, its capital. Command of Roman military elements, coupled with sympathetic Gallic, 'barbarian' and British populations, meant Carausius faced little opposition.

Killed by his minister

Carausius was likely quick to control the export of grain in order to bolster the local economy. He also established at least two mints, one of which was in London; another producing coins marked with a 'C'. These coins reinforced his position by highlighting support of the military (the breakaway produced the first navy in defence of Britain), newfound peace and prosperity, and his role



Rebel emperor: Carausius shown on a coin minted in Britain

as 'restorer of Britain'. He styled himself as a Roman emperor, a re-embodiment of Augustus and the 'renewer of the Romans'.

But Carausius remained a usurper, and a failed invasion by Maximian in c289/90 offers evidence of Rome's unwillingness to accept his authority. This did not stop Carausius trying to set his own political agenda, and he issued coins carrying his portrait, alongside those of the co-emperors Diocletian and Maximian with the legend *CARAVSIVS ET FRATRES SVI* – "Carausius and his brothers". While Britannia's physical and economic separation from Rome was clear, Carausius sought recognition as an equal with his 'brothers' in Rome – and they probably grudgingly accepted him, while planning to strike at him as soon as they could.

As it turned out, they didn't have to wait long, for in 293 Carausius was assassinated by his own finance minister, Allectus. Allectus went on to rule in Carausius's stead, but his administration was even more short-lived than his predecessor's, falling victim to a two-pronged invasion of Britain in 296.

The Britannic empire had come to an end, and Britain was quickly reintegrated into the Roman empire. This victory was encapsulated in a triumphal march through London by Emperor Constantius I as *REDDITOR LVCIS AETERNAE* – 'Restorer of the Eternal Light (of Rome)'. In Britain, it would be more than 100 years before that 'eternal' light was extinguished.

......

Andrew Brown is assistant national finds advisor for Iron Age and Roman coins at the British Museum



"For the next decade,
 Europe looked
 on, increasingly
 bewildered, as
 England tore itself
 to pieces"

A 15th-century depiction of the battle of Castillon. When Henry VI learned of this defeat to the French, he fell into a catatonic stupor

Calamities abroad; chaos at home

Lauren Johnson outlines how Henry VI's travails in France in 1453 led to the Wars of the Roses

t the end of the Hundred Years'
War, the English were finally
driven from every corner of
France to which they laid claim
except for the pale around
Calais. What had once been an extensive
realm under King Henry VI was lost irretrievably. How did this happen?

Henry VI inherited the thrones of England and of France before his first birthday.

Although, or perhaps because, he was the son of Henry V, the victor of Agincourt, his chief policy from his earliest days was to secure peace with France. In the cause of this policy, Henry VI sacrificed one bargaining chip after another in the misguided belief that he would forge an alliance to end the war without diminishing either himself or England.

A French nobleman released from English captivity, Henry's marriage arranged to an impoverished French princess, territory ceded – all were futile gestures made without reciprocal treaties ever being agreed.

But Henry's inept diplomacy alone was not to blame for the loss of France. His subjects' blind conviction of their own national superiority meant there was insufficient investment in holding French territories. The English were the victors of Agincourt, after all. They had defeated the French in pitched battle before, surely they would triumph over them again?

Such complacency proved fatal. Repeated appeals from the commanders of Englishheld garrisons in France for support went unanswered. Warnings that the French army was being reorganised and readied for a major campaign were ignored. When, just as Henry's commanders had predicted, the French marched into English-held Normandy, the duchy was lost. The Norman capital, Rouen, surrendered without a single cannon being shot. Perhaps if Henry had then imitated his father and led an army to France he could have rallied sufficient support to turn the tide, but there was never any indication he intended to do so. By 1450, only Calais and Gascony still held for the English crown.

Henry's catatonic stupor

In 1453, at the battle of Castillon in Gascony, Henry's commander, the sexagenarian John Talbot, launched a cavalry attack on a French gunnery. His army was blown to pieces and Talbot killed – his body so mangled that his herald could only identify it by feeling inside his mouth for a missing tooth. The collapse of Talbot's army at Castillon had disastrous consequences not just for Gascony, which fell within four months, but for England. When Henry received news of Castillon, he fell into a catatonic stupor from which he could not be roused for 17 months.

During Henry's 'infirmity' (as his councillors euphemistically put it), his kinsman, Richard, Duke of York, took control of government. A Yorkist faction that had been vying for authority with Henry's Lancastrian courtiers for years hardened into a political opposition. The result was the Wars of the Roses. For the next decade, Europe looked on, increasingly bewildered, as England tore itself to pieces. After Henry had been deposed, then restored, then deposed again, one Italian ambassador, attempting to make sense of English politics, grew frustrated. "I wish the country and the people were plunged deep in the sea," he wrote. "I feel like one going to the torture when I write about them."

Insanity, civil war and international mortification: losing a substantial English presence in Europe had dire consequences.

Lauren Johnson is a historian and author.
Her latest book is Shadow King:
The Life and Death of Henry VI

Under Henry VI, the English Iost virtually all their possessions in France

(Head of Zeus, 2019)



German troops march into Austria – with little dissent from Britain – in March 1938

"Chamberlain
beat a cowardly
retreat from the
continent, thus
feeding Hitler's
appetite for conquest"

A semi-detached disaster

Piers Brendon argues that British parochialism in 1938 helped, ironically enough, to draw it into a second global conflict

t the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, where Gladstonian Liberals had favoured international cooperation, Lord Salisbury's Conservatives gloried in the idea of splendid isolation. But after the bloodletting of the First World War, Austen Chamberlain, as foreign secretary, extolled the merits of semi-detachment. Clinging chastely to her imperial draperies, Britannia would keep her European neighbours safely at arm's length.

This involved enfeebling the newly formed League of Nations, which therefore could not provide collective security, and imposed only weak sanctions on Italy after Mussolini's assault on Ethiopia. It entailed non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War. It also meant that Britain did not challenge Nazi Germany over the remilitarisation of the Rhineland and the seizure of Austria. Then, in 1938, Neville Chamberlain took the policy of disengagement to its most disastrous extreme. Facing Hitler's threat to dismember Czechoslovakia, he expressed horror at the prospect of intervening in "a quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing".

Chamberlain's motives were commendable: he wished to preserve peace abroad and, in the midst of the Great Depression, to promote prosperity at home. But he failed to grasp Hitler's pathologically aggressive intentions.

Describing him after their first encounter as "the commonest little dog he had ever seen", Chamberlain assumed that Hitler could be mollified with titbits.

Averse to foreigners generally, like many of his compatriots, he also snubbed the French and spurned the Russians, refusing to recognise that Britain's own security depended on the formation of a strong European alliance. To this, Czechoslovakia, with its 35 well-equipped divisions, could have made a potent contribution. But, as its ambassador Jan Masaryk remarked, he had to spend much of his time explaining to the British that his country, with its unfamiliar jumble of letters, was not an infectious disease.

A fatal sacrifice

Chamberlain's three airborne overtures to Hitler culminated in the cession of the Sudeten fringe of Czechoslovakia at Munich. On 30 September 1938, he returned home in triumph, clutching his umbrella, waving his piece of paper and announcing he had brought "peace with honour". Actually he had fatally sacrificed democracy to dictatorship and beaten a cowardly retreat from the continent, thus feeding Hitler's appetite for conquest. Brendan Bracken, who served in Winston Churchill's wartime cabinet, joked, "One Funk in the German cabinet, and twenty-two in the British." Churchill himself

prophetically declared that Britain had been "offered a choice between war and shame. She has chosen shame, and will get war."

Chamberlain's defenders claim that at Munich he bought valuable time for rearmament. But Hitler made better use of it and in any case Chamberlain thought he had achieved a permanent settlement. So in 1938 Britain missed its most favourable opportunity to resist Germany, whose generals predicted catastrophe if the small and ill-prepared Wehrmacht had to fight on two fronts. According to Mass Observation, only 54 per cent of Britons supported the appearement policy at its zenith and that figure shrank rapidly after Kristallnacht, the occupation of Prague and the attack on Poland. By 1940 Britain had no European allies and, nostalgia for the Dunkirk spirit notwithstanding, its isolation was more perilous than splendid.

Piers Brendon is a former keeper of the Churchill Archives Centre and an emeritus fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge

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BOOKS





INTERVIEW / HALLIE RUBENHOLD

"To most people, the women killed by the Ripper are just corpses. I want to tell a different story"

Hallie Rubenhold talks to **Ellie Cawthorne** about her new book, which aims to set the record straight on the lives of the Victorian murderer's five victims

PROFILE HALLIERUBENHOLD

Hallie Rubenhold is an author, social historian and historical consultant. Her previous books include *The French Lesson* (2016), *The Covent Garden Ladies* (2005), which inspired the ITV series *Harlots*, and *Lady Worsley's Whim* (2008), which was adapted into *The Scandalous Lady W* for BBC Two

Your new book explores the lives of Jack the Ripper's victims, rather than focusing on their deaths. Why did you feel it was important to tell this side of the story?

Because it is virtually untold. For many, Jack the Ripper is just a bit of fun. They enjoy dressing up as him for Halloween, or laughing and screaming when he jumps out at the London Dungeon, but they don't really take on board the victims and their experiences. To most people, the women Jack the Ripper killed are just corpses.

But I wanted to tell a different story – not of these five women's murders, but of the daily reality of their lives in Victorian England. I don't believe the actual moments of murder are relevant to that.

The Jack the Ripper case has been widely commercialised and even glamorised. What do you think is behind this obsession?

These murders are considered to be the classic unsolved crime, and people are fascinated by that prospect. It has become a kind of parlour game to see whether we can crack the case once and for all.

From a historical point of view, however, the body of evidence that surrounds the crimes is riddled with problems. In terms of the surviving documentation, the closest we will ever get to effectively bringing the Ripper to trial is the coroner's inquest. That gathers together all of the witnesses and is a sort of compilation of everything there is to know about the murders. But the evidence is very flawed – for example, the coroner's documents are missing for three of the five women, meaning that we have to rely on newspaper transcripts. But I found that if you look at 10 different newspapers, you will find 10 different versions of what a witness said at the inquest.

I think that people have been afraid to admit that the available historical documentation is deeply, deeply flawed. I don't think we will ever solve the murders, so we need to put that idea to bed.

What can you tell us about the lives of these five women?

Together, the women's stories took me to some very dark places – they include homelessness, alcoholism, domestic abuse and even sex trafficking.

With the exception of Mary Jane Kelly, they were all in their 40s when they died, and all came from working-class backgrounds. The assumption is that "they were all prostitutes who came from Whitechapel". But what's really interesting is that none of them actually hailed from Whitechapel, and they were all led there by very different life experiences. So it rather irked me that they have been lumped together like that.

Was life as a working-class Victorian woman unremittingly grim?

In the 19th century, being both poor and a woman was a terrible combination.

If a woman was very poor, she could work as a charwoman, labour in a sweatshop, take on piecemeal home-work, or become a domestic servant. But all of these tasks were incredibly arduous and the hours were very long. The best of that bad bunch was a life in service, where a woman could rise through the ranks if she worked extremely hard. Even so, it was a life of drudgery and hardship.

Victorian society operated on the proviso that women were never designed to be breadwinners. The types of work available to them were very poorly paid – they were never intended to support a family. Women were expected to be wives, mothers and caregivers, not the head of a household. If a woman's husband or father got ill, died or abandoned her, she often couldn't bring in enough money to sustain her family. The cards were stacked against her.

Life could be very precarious, and the state safety net was awful. The workhouse was designed to punish people – you would be shamed, it was a terrible existence. It was either that, or ending up on the street.

Did any of the women's stories capture your imagination in particular?

This was the most emotive book I've ever written, and all of the women's stories touched me in different ways.

Victorian society saw all dispossessed or homeless women as prostitutes One that was deeply tragic was that of Annie Chapman. Although she came from a working-class background, Annie had the opportunity to escape the grasp of grinding poverty and move into the lower middle classes. Her husband worked as the head coachman on a country estate, and the family were putting money aside for their daughters to go to decent schools: they were moving up in society. But Annie was a chronic alcoholic, which threw everything off course. Poverty was so truly awful at the time, and to have defeated that fate only to slip back into it is incredibly sad.

Elizabeth Stride's story is also absolutely fascinating. She found herself caught up in state-sanctioned prostitution in Sweden, before being 'rescued' by a woman who took her on as a servant. Elizabeth eventually emigrated to London, where she worked for a wealthy family and married a carpenter. The strength of character that she demonstrated as an immigrant was extraordinary.

How did you go about reconstructing their lives?

We're fortunate because there were a number of newspaper interviews done with people who knew the victims, so you start with those fragments and corroborate them with other documents like death records or censuses. I could wax lyrical about censuses, because the information you can glean from them is amazing. You can get a very finite picture of who lived in a house and what a neighbourhood was like. Other extremely illuminating sources are Charles Booth's poverty maps, which graph the geographies of poverty in the capital.

Getting a sense of London's smells, sights and sounds is actually fairly easy, because 19th-century social investigators and journalists penned prolific amounts of marvellous, colourful material describing the city. When you immerse yourself in all of that, you get a much stronger sense of how people would have lived in that environment, and what psychological state they would have had to have been in to endure it.

All five of these women - whether correctly or not - were labelled as prostitutes. Did this shape how their murders were discussed?

I set out to write this book because I wanted to explore Victorian sex work. And who are



An illustration from 1888, the year of the Ripper murders, shows 'Outcasts Sleeping in Sheds in Whitechapel'. At least three of the victims were known to be homeless and were killed in places frequented by rough sleepers, says Hallie Rubenhold

the most famous prostitutes of the 19th century? The victims of Jack the Ripper. Yes, both Elizabeth Stride and Mary Jane Kelly had worked as prostitutes, but what surprised me was that in the other three cases, I could not find any hard evidence to suggest that the women had been sex workers at all.

I think that this misunderstanding has arisen because of a tendency to take everything that the Victorian establishment said about these women at face value. At that time, society saw all dispossessed women as prostitutes. The fact that a poor woman was an addict or out on the street at night was enough to assume she was a sex worker. The concept of homelessness was conflated with that of street prostitution. But I've tried to pick apart those two strands to look more accurately at what happened to women when they found themselves in compromised circumstances. At least three of the victims were known to be homeless, and did not have enough money on them for the doss house on the nights they were killed. They were also found in places that rough sleepers were known to frequent, and were killed in reclining positions with no struggle or noise. The fact that we have chosen to ignore these facts for 130 years is very interesting.

There's also a lot to be said about the fact

that Polly Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes all lived with men out of wedlock. In some cases they were still married, but since they were separated from their husbands (something that was surrounded by great shame), they couldn't support themselves financially. In order to survive they had to shack up with other men. Even though these were often monogamous relationships, they were branded adulteresses and whores.

If you look at the lists of women who were admitted into refuges for 'fallen women' at this time, they fell into a number of categories – women who had worked as prostitutes, women who were mistresses, women who were victims of rape and women who were victims of incest. Any woman who had sex outside of marriage was seen as damaged goods. She was like Eve – she had eaten the forbidden fruit and acquired knowledge that was detrimental to her status as a woman.

Do moral judgments still shape the way these women are viewed?

To a certain degree, yes. Whether we are willing to admit it or not, our society still carries a prejudice against sex workers.

There is an idea that women who are 'bad' deserve to be punished, and that sex workers are somehow lesser women; they are

'sub-women'. That really hasn't changed much since the 1880s.

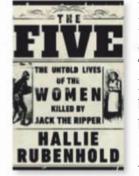
Take, for example, the Suffolk Murders case of 2006. During the trial, the judge asked the jury to lay aside their prejudices about the victims selling sex or taking drugs, because regardless of what they did in life, they did not deserve to be murdered. The fact that a judge still had to say that relatively recently is absolutely shocking.

The book has already sparked a reaction from 'Ripperologists'. Are you gearing up for a fight?

There is a strong sense of ownership of the material by that said group of people, and I think this is why they are unhappy that somebody from outside the community is writing a book about their subject.

But I also think that it's a shame people are so worried and concerned. If my book makes people question what they consider to be

truths, then a good thing has been done.



The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper by Hallie Rubenhold (Doubleday, 432 pages, £16.99)

67

BRIDGEMAN

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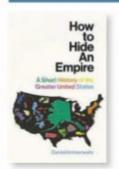
Colonial adventures

ANDREW JOHNSTONE recommends a history of the United States that reveals its role as an imperial power



How to Hide an Empire: A Short History of the **Greater United States**

by Daniel Immerwahr The Bodley Head, 528 pages, £25



"America has never been an empire," claimed George W Bush on the presiden tial campaign trail in 1999. He was, of course, wrong. Yet his comment reflected the

fact that Americans see themselves as a part of a nation forged in reaction to empire, rather than as empire builders themselves. Daniel Immerwahr's fascinating new book seeks to amend that view by offering a history of the United States that goes beyond an examination of the nation's united states to look at its territories, colonies, occupied zones and bases.

While the United States has often been accused of imperialism in an informal or economic sense, the fo here is firmly on its formal empire. Immerwahr provides a history of the "Greater United States" that includes states in waiting such as Hawaii and Alaska, now independent nations like the Philippines, post-Second World War occupation zones in places such as

Germany and Japan, and still-unincorporated territories, including Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and Guam.

The book opens with the relatively well known story of westward expansion across the American continent, but moves quickly to the overseas imperialism of the late 19th century. The expansion of territory that followed war with Spain in 1898 is the most obvious example of American imperialism, but Immerwahr looks beyond the fighting and focuses on the occupations that followed. Much of that story includes revolutionary conflict, but it also examines how US territories were used as a testing ground for anything from medicines to urban planning.

And while the mainland was barely affected by external attacks, the book illuminates how the Second World War had an impact on the Greater United States all across the Pacific. This stretched far beyond Pearl Harbor, from the occupation of Alaskan islands to the brutal war in the Philippines, which Immerwahr describes as "by far the most destructive event ever to take place on US soil".

The 15 years after the Second World War saw independence for the Philippines, and statehood for Alaska and Hawaii, but the empire of the Greater United States endures. This is partly through the continuing hold over unincorporated territories. The empire also continues in a different form, through military bases dotted across the globe in what Immerwahr memorably calls a "pointillist empire". That scattered network of outposts includes those protecting economic interests in the Middle East, alongside those held over from the Spanish-American War in Cuba, the Second World War in Japan, and the Cold War in Europe.

This is an easily readable and vividly written book, filled with numerous

The Greater United States endures through military bases dotted across the globe

BRIDGEMAN





COMING SOON...

"Next issue I'll be speaking to Anita Anand about her new book *The Patient Assassin*, which chronicles one man's 20-year quest for vengeance following the Amritsar massacre. Plus we'll have reviews on Bauhaus, Brexit and Saladin."

Ellie Cawthorne, staff writer

fascinating tales, some well known, but many obscure. For example, few will be familiar with the significance of the 19th-century quest for guano in the story of American imperialism. Yet the search for fertiliser on isolated and uninhabited rocks forced the nation to recognise that it had legal responsibilities off its continental mainland.

Even after the need for guano had long vanished, such islands were reconfigured for different purposes. The CIA utilised the Swan Islands off Honduras to host a radio transmitter that could reach across Central and South America, and used it to support the successful 1954 coup in Guatemala, as well as the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. The book is

Few will be familiar with the significance of guano in the story of American imperialism

filled with stories such as these, which illuminate the wider history of both the United States and its colonies.

How to Hide an Empire makes no effort to provide a comprehensive survey. Instead, it highlights incidents and episodes from across the past 200 years and from across the American empire. A diversion in the second half to consider why the United States did not take advantage of its power to expand its colonial empire after 1945 feels slightly tangential, but still helps to explain why the American empire currently takes the form of isolated islands and bases.

One issue that deserved a little more attention is why Americans today have such a blind spot regarding their imperial history. The extensive footnotes make it clear that historians have written about these possessions before, so why do Americans continue to believe that the country has never been an empire? Still, this book should go some way to correcting that view.

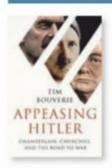
Andrew Johnstone is director of American studies and associate professor of American history at the University of Leicester

Deluded policy

NIGELJONES is impressed by an account of why the 1930s appeasement of Nazi Germany was doomed to fail

Appeasing Hitler: Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War

by Tim Bouverie
The Bodley Head, 400 pages, £20



Appeasement is one of the dirtiest words in modern political parlance. Politicians are regularly accused of "appeasing" terrorists, criminals and vested interests, which is

assumed to be a bad thing. It is generally forgotten that appeasement of Europe's Nazi and fascist dictators was originally the official policy of Neville Chamberlain's government – and moreover that it was wildly popular with his own Conservatives, the Labour opposition and the majority of the public at large.

One of the many merits of Tim Bouverie's gripping narrative history of the appeasement era is that he repeatedly shows, with contemporary evidence, that Chamberlain boasted overwhelming support for his attempts to appease Hitler. The scales fell from Britain's collective eyes only at the very last minute, with the Nazi occupation of the rump of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 – barely six months after Hitler had pledged at Munich to do no such thing.

It is scarcely surprising that appeasement enjoyed such popularity. Memories of the carnage of the trenches were still raw, and sympathy for Germany – and, alarmingly, for her Nazi government – was widespread, particularly within the political elite. On the left, the prevailing doctrine of choice was pacifism, which

chimed well with the national government's reluctance to spend money on rearmament, even in the face of Hitler's military build-up and his ever-bolder acts of aggression.

Bouverie takes us step by step along the road to war in a fluent, clearly written chronology that blends events abroad with the political reaction at home. The loudest voice who warned against the growing threat posed by Hitler, belonged, of course, to Winston Churchill. The book concludes with Churchill's accession to the premiership.

In recent years there have been attempts to revise history's negative verdict on Chamberlain and appeasement. It has been rightly asserted that Britain was not ready or equipped for war in 1938. Moreover, the Munich agreement brought a precious year that was used to boost the RAF's Fighter Command and radar defences, crucial factors during the Battle of Britain.

While this is true, it was certainly not Chamberlain's reason for allowing Hitler to get his way. A man of monumental vanity and delusion, the prime minister genuinely and naively thought the Nazi dictator was a man of honour who would keep his word. Chamberlain's pathetic belief that he had brought home "peace for our time" would shatter on the rocks of hard reality all too soon.

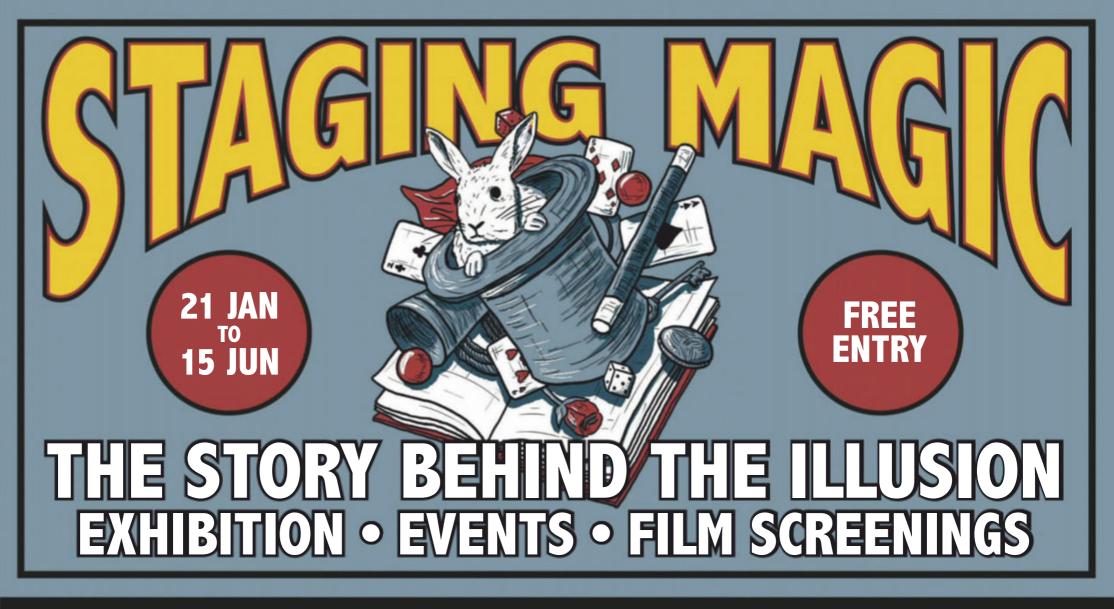
In an impressive debut for a young historian, Tim Bouverie has reasserted the traditional verdict on appeasement with a book that is as fast-moving and exciting as the momentous events it describes. It is a glowing vindication of the fact that well written and researched

history need not be dry and dull. **II**

Nige Coun

Nigel Jones's books include *Countdown to Valkyrie* (2009)

The British prime minister Neville Chamberlain meets Adolf Hitler in Munich, 1938 **GETTY IMAGES**





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A painting by Abraham Hondius shows a 'frost fair' on the Thames, c1684. Among the attractions – in the middle of the picture – was a boat on wheels

When the weather rebelled

JOHN MORGAN assesses an account of the early modern period that sees climate as a driver of change

Nature's Mutiny: How the Little Ice Age Transformed the West and Shaped the Present

by Philipp Blom
Picador, 336 pages, £20



When John Evelyn observed the frozen Thames in early 1684, he was amazed by the streets of shops, sporting competitions and even the printing press that

had been set up on the ice. The frozen river was a marvel, a place of excitement, entertainment and fun. Despite living at the end of a profoundly religious age, in which thunderstorms, comets and freak weather events were routinely interpreted as the manifestations of divine wrath, Evelyn struck a more secular chord. No longer were shocks in the natural world interpreted, as they might have been a century previously, as punishments for England's sinful ways. For Evelyn, whatever had caused the exceptional

cold had little to do with religion or morality. It is this transformation in the understanding of natural events that lies at the heart of *Nature's Mutiny*.

The Little Ice Age is the major protagonist here. This was a period of belowaverage global temperatures experienced between 1300 and 1850, which was at its coldest in the later 16th century and 17th century. This era overlapped with one of significant economic, social and cultural change across Europe, as markets came to dominate economic life, cities expanded rapidly, and new ideas about God and nature spread within the educated elite. For Blom, this was no mere coincidence. Changes in climate drove agricultural innovation, which precipitated migration to cities, which in turn fostered the cultivation and

A change in physical climate ushered in a new intellectual climate



transmission of new and unorthodox ideas. A change in the physical climate ushered in a new intellectual climate.

The problem with this argument is that it is very difficult to prove. The currents of history that run throughout *Nature's Mutiny* have diffuse origins. While the environment and climate all played a part in agricultural innovation, European overseas expansion, the growth of market economies and the early Enlightenment, none of these developments are proven to have occurred as a direct result of climatic change.

Nature's Mutiny does not dwell on the processes by which climate changed European society. Instead, it focuses on the purported inputs and outputs of this process, leaving at its core something of a

A century of change

JUNE PURVIS enjoys a lively account of how women have challenged the culture within the House of Commons

Women of Westminster: The MPs Who Changed Politics

by Rachel Reeves

IB Tauris, 320 pages, £18.99



Based upon a wide range of sources and interviews, Rachel Reeves, Labour MP for Leeds West, has written a lively and fascinating book about the first 100 years of

women in the Houses of Parliament.

The first woman to take her lonely seat in parliament, in 1919, was Viscountess

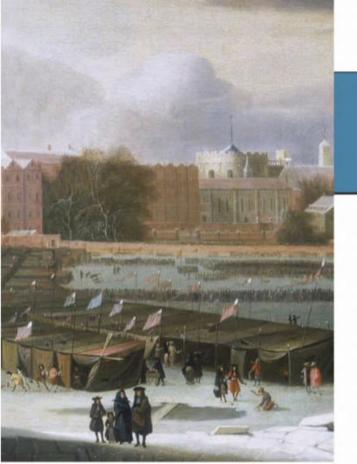
Nancy Astor, a Conservative. "I find a woman's intrusion into the House of Commons as embarrassing as if she burst into my bathroom when I had nothing to defend myself, not even a sponge," harrumphed Winston Churchill, an attitude that was all too common among his male colleagues. The plucky Astor soon learnt how to deal with such sexism, especially when other women, such as the fiery, working-class Ellen Wilkinson, a noted left-winger, entered the house.

Although these early female MPs – many unmarried and without children

 did not always agree on various issues, they often pushed collaboratively for legislation that advanced the cause of women, such as equal rights of guardianship and family allowances. They laid the foundations for those who would follow, including Labour's Barbara
 Castle and her 1970 Equal Pay Act.

It was particularly with the Labour landslide victory in the general election of 1997 that more women entered the Commons – 101 for Labour, 13 Conservatives, three Liberal Democrats and two for the Scottish National Party. Although they formed just 18.2 per cent of those holding seats, it was the beginning of a new era. There was a marked shift towards a women-focused politics as progress was made on childcare, parental leave and action against domestic violence. Yet although

GELLY IMAGES



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A richer tapestry

MAX ADAMS salutes a book that celebrates the historical significance of sewing, embroidery and weaving

Threads of Life: A History of the World Through the Eye of a Needle

by Clare Hunter
Sceptre, 320 pages, £20



Historians have neglected textiles. Embroidery, needlework and weaving have been dismissed as mere decorative arts, or portrayed as low-brow domestic crafts. Shame-

fully, historians have too often failed to appreciate that, in the monogrammed handkerchief, sampler or quilt are coded literacies. Here are narrative voices to set against written words, fine art, architecture, and the material culture of agriculture and industry, as sources for social and political history. Clare Hunter is on a mission to change this situation.

Those neglected literacies are over-whelmingly female. They speak of tradition and legacy, of status and belonging, of aspiration and creation. From the imprisoned Mary, Queen of Scots to Palestinian refugees, Hunter shows how women used needlework to encode complex messages about identity and history – both in the images that they chose and in their technique, artistry, choice of materials and use of colour. Each suffragette banner, every quilt, all those 'Home Sweet Home' samplers, are palimpsests of meaning, landscape histories of community.

Our starting point is the Bayeux Tapestry. A cartoon tale celebrating William of Normandy's conquest of England in 1066, its creator is unknown, although it was likely embroidered by a community of religious women at Canterbury. It is a story of men, portraying very few women (just three in the main panels). However, as Hunter reveals, its more nuanced undertext — that of its embroiderers — has plenty to say about the female experience.

For all that their narratives – of love, defiance, loss, deprivation and solidarity – are robust, the sewers' medium is fragile. Clothes wear out or are recycled, thrown away or lost and, all too often, poorly curated. Hunter finds her gems stuffed in old pillow cases and chests in attics, miscatalogued in archives or shoved in drawers. The works of some of her heroines do not survive at all.

Most of the eye-opening stories in *Threads of Life*, blended with elements of the author's own journey from postwar Glaswegian poverty to political and artistic activism, belong to the last two or three centuries, from when so much fabric survives. There is more, much more, yet to be written about medieval and earlier textiles and about those lands where ancient sewn and woven art survives in brilliant, extraordinary splendour – South America, particularly.

If ever a book needed generous illustration, this is it. But, apart from sumptuous endpapers that reproduce a subversive quilt by the African-American former slave Harriet Powers, there are none. Nevertheless, Hunter's moral purpose rings loud and clear. Needlework is a polyphonic archaeology of, primarily, women's voices, ideas,

loyalties and creativity. It matters to art, history and contemporary politics, to our shared sense of cultural value. Make no mistake: this is an important book.

Max Adams' latest book is Unquiet Women: From the Dusk of the Roman Empire to the Dawn of the Enlightenment (Head of Zeus, 2018)

black box, the workings of which are never fully explained.

Nature's Mutiny is at its most compelling when recounting the intellectual and philosophical developments of the early modern period. Here, Blom's skill as a storyteller shines through. Complex philosophical debates are rendered accessible, as Blom pivots deftly from keenly observed details about the lives of major thinkers to the cosmic ramifications of their ideas. While readers might come to the book for an environmental history of early modern Europe, they will stay for the lively discussion of its ideas, culture and personalities.

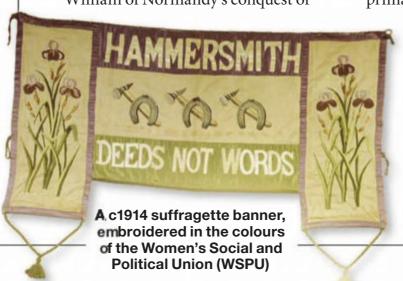
John Morgan is a lecturer in early modern history at the University of Manchester

the Conservatives have had two female prime ministers, no Labour female MP, including the influential Harriet Harman, has so far taken on the role.

Reforms to make the Commons more family-friendly by reducing the sitting hours and establishing a nursery have been controversial, but implemented. And female MPs today, who now form one third of the total, continue to challenge the cosy male atmosphere, including calling out harassment.

Engaging and informative, *Women* of *Westminster* is essential reading for anyone interested in the workings of the British parliamentary system.

June Purvis is professor emerita of women's and gender history at the University of Portsmouth and author of *Christabel Pankhurst: A Biography* (Routledge, 2018)





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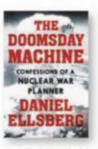
PAPERBACKS





The Doomsday Machine: **Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner**

by Daniel Ellsberg Bloomsbury, 432 pages, £9.99



Daniel Ellsberg is, to a very great extent, the father of all whistleblowers. He rose to prominence in the early 1970s

with his deliberate leaking of the 'Pentagon Papers' thousands of pages of highly secret US Department of Defense documents about the plight of the Vietnam War. Ellsberg was brought to trial and prepared for what he assumed would be a lifetime in prison. He only managed to avoid such a lengthy term because of legal complications arising from the manner in which Nixon's White House had pursued its case.

Unknown at the time was the fact that Ellsberg had copied far more than just papers on

Vietnam. Indeed, his quarry amounted to more than 15,000 pages. Perhaps the most explosive of all was the material he had decided to hold back in the early 1970s – the exceptionally sensitive documents on America's plan for a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Some of these papers were so secret that they were marked: "Top Secret – Sensitive. For the President's Eyes Only." Ellsberg hid these papers with his brother while his trial continued, with the aspiration of releasing them shortly thereafter. But by a quirk of fate they would be buried in green bin bags in a local dump and thereafter lost to the world.

In The Doomsday Machine Ellsberg recounts his version of events. Writing 45 years later means that the vast majority of the documents he copied have now been declassified. This in turn means that, while his story is a great one and the documents certainly interesting, their exposure today lacks the grandeur of a 1970s release.

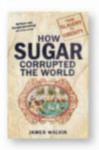
Nevertheless, the book is a sobering tale of fear, paranoia, warmongering and the grim realities of the Cold War.

Michael Goodman is a professor in intelligence and international affairs at King's College London

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How Sugar Corrupted the World: From Slavery to Obesity

by James Walvin Robinson, 352 pages, £9.99



A baby is torn from its mother's arms and thrown overboard by a sailor irritated by its cries. This haunting image of

casual brutality was a normal part of the business of slavery. Everyone in Britain who spooned sugar into their tea was complicit in such horrors. But just as capitalism hides the ugly side of production today – think of Bangladeshi women making cheap clothes in

unstable factories – the harsh realities of sugar cultivation were sufficiently far away in the Caribbean to be overlooked.

James Walvin charts how the relentless rise of sugar consumption in Europe and America was accompanied by environmental degradation and the brutal exploitation of millions of slaves and indentured labourers. He traces the emergence of sugar-based big business, its investment in our addiction and its complicity in the obesity epidemic that now afflicts many of the world's poor.

It is an awful irony that sugar continues to poison African-American lives: a shocking 57 per cent of African-American women are obese, a demonstration of the way the racism institutionalised by slavery structures the inequalities of today's America.

When we discuss this issue, we need to guard against sounding like those 19thcentury commentators who condemned workers' reliance on sugary tea without acknowledging that this was a state of affairs imposed by capitalism: cheap sugar supplied Victorian workers with energy while allowing industrialists to pay them low wages. The hidden ill-health this caused could be disregarded in the days when government took little responsibility for the population's wellbeing.

But sugar-induced malnutrition is no longer hidden. Exposed by the rolls of fat around sedentary office workers' waists and by the spiralling cost to the NHS of treating obesity related disease, it has become harder to ignore.

Lizzie Collingham's latest book is The Hungry Empire: How Britain's Quest for Food Shaped the Modern World (The Bodley Head, 2017)





Louis Armstrong (1901–71), whose career was at a low ebb after the Second World War, features in Ray Celestin's *The Mobster's Lament*

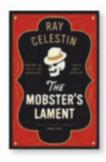
FICTION

Harlem nights

NICK RENNISON digs the beat of a neo-noir novel that brings the New York of the 1940s vividly to life

The Mobster's Lament

by Ray Celestin
Mantle, 576 pages, £16.99



Gabriel Leveson is the manager of the Copacabana nightclub in New York and a fixer for the mob. The Second World War has been over for two years, people are out to enjoy themselves and

the Copa is packed every night, but Gabriel wants out. He has devised an elaborate scheme to flee the city with his young niece and disappear in Mexico. But just days before they are due to depart, Gabriel gets a call from his boss, Frank Costello, head of New York's most powerful crime family. Two million dollars of mob money has gone missing and Costello wants Gabriel to find it.

Meanwhile, across town in Harlem, a cheap flophouse has been the location for a manic killing spree in which four people have died. A black army veteran and former doctor named Tom Talbot has been arrested at what the tabloid newspapers are calling the "Harlem

House of Horrors" and charged with the murders. Tom's father, Michael summons private detective (and his former business partner) Ida Davis from Chicago to find the evidence to clear his son. Their investigation soon opens up gaping holes in the prosecution case. Louis Armstrong, the trumpeter and an old friend of Ida, is also in the city, just returned from an unsuccessful tour. Jazz is changing. Bebop and Charlie Parker are all the rage while Louis's career looks to be on the slide.

As the novel's clever plot unfolds, the paths of Gabriel, Michael, Ida and Louis all cross. Slowly the truth about the killings in Harlem emerges and the corruption lurking beneath the surface of New York life is revealed.

The Mobster's Lament is the third in Ray Celestin's series of self-contained stories about murder, the Mafia and popular music. It's both a gripping work of neo-noir crime fiction and a panoramic portrait of the Big Apple in one of its most vibrantly creative periods.

Nick Rennison is the author of *Carver's Truth* (Corvus, 2016)

THREE MORE NOVELS WITH A JAZZ SOUNDTRACK

The Axeman's Jazz

Ray Celestin (2014)



It's 1919, and a serial killer is on the loose in New Orleans. No one knows where he will strike next but the so-called Axeman sends a letter to the newspapers, stating

that he loves jazz so much he will spare anyone who is listening to it. Ray Celestin's debut novel is a vivid, atmospheric crime story in which three unlikely detectives, one of them a young Louis Armstrong, stumble towards the truth about the murders.

Jazz

Toni Morrison (1992)

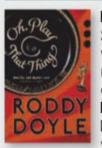


Echoing the music which provides its title, both in its prose and its narrative structure, Jazz is one of the finest works by the Nobel Prize-winning African-American

author. Set mostly in Harlem in the 1920s, but moving back in time to the Deep South in the 19th century, the novel uses the story of a passionate affair that goes badly wrong as the starting point for a moving, poetic examination of the black American experience.

Oh, Play That Thing

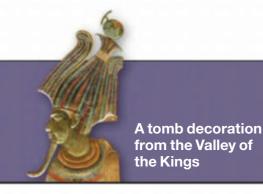
Roddy Doyle (2004)



Between 1999 and 2010, Roddy Doyle wrote a trilogy of novels, collectively dubbed 'The Last Roundup', about Irishman Henry Smart, youngest participant

in the 1916 Easter Rising and a legendary hard man in the years of violence that followed. *Oh, Play That Thing* is the second book in a richly entertaining series and shows Henry in enforced exile in America, first in New York and then in Chicago, tracing his adventures amid the speakeasies and jazz clubs of the Prohibition era. Again, Louis Armstrong features.

GETTY IMAGES



Jonathan Wright previews the pick of upcoming programmes

Ancient sites

Egypt's Valley of the Kings

TV Channel 4

Scheduled for Sunday 24 March

It's approaching a century since Howard Carter located the tomb of Tutankhamun, yet the boy king continues to fascinate us. One reason for this – as the first in a four-part series following the work of archaeologists over an excavation season in Egypt's Valley of the Kings reminds us – is that there's still so much we don't know about his life and times. Researchers use new technology to demonstrate how Tutankhamun's tomb stayed hidden for so long, and the programme eavesdrops as a long-lost box of treasures comes to light.



Bricks on the border

The Wall

TV PBS America

Scheduled for Monday 1 April

As Donald Trump battles to get the money to construct a wall on the border between the US and Mexico, here's a reminder that the president's big idea is hardly a new notion. Shot in Ultra High-Definition 4K, this series explores the West Bank barrier, the Korean Demilitarized Zone, the walls separat ing communities in Northern Ireland, Cyprus's Green Line, the Berlin Wall and existing barriers between the US and Mexico. Each episode looks at how the walls were built, how they affect people's day-to-day lives, and what happens when walls come down.

Formative years

Producer Neil Koenig discusses a series that explores the key events in a tumultuous decade

The Decade That Invented the **Future: The 1970s**

Radio Radio 4

Scheduled for Monday 15 April

As the era of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll, when the world went from black and white to colour, the 1960s are endlessly revisited. But what about the 1970s? As BBC radio producer Neil Koenig points out, "a lot of the developments from the 70s actually seem to have had more of an influence on our lives today than some of the things that happened in the 60s".

Support for this idea comes in a new weekday series for Radio 4, where experts old enough to remember the decade look back at "one event per year that was significant at the time" and whose "effects are still felt today".

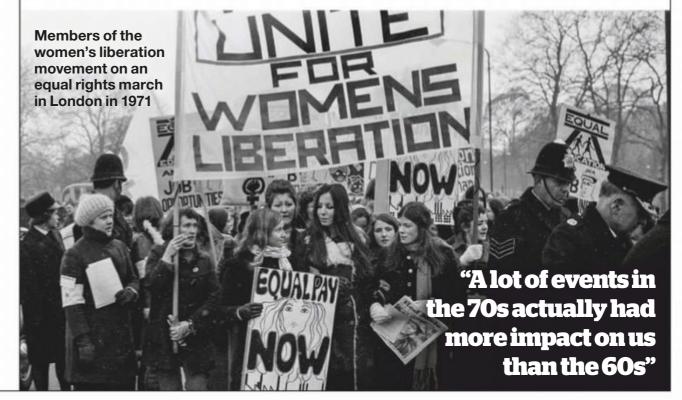
For the show on 1970, feminist writer Sheila Rowbotham revisits an event she helped organise: Britain's first National Women's Liberation Conference, held in Oxford. Initially, this was set to be a women's history conference, but it morphed during the planning process. More than 500 women attended what is now seen as a landmark event in the history of British feminism.

"They discovered through organising

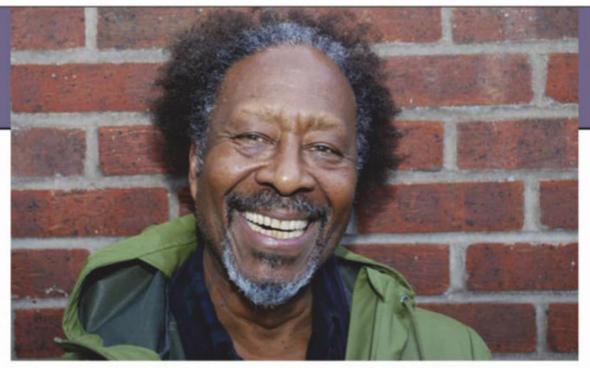
the event that there were people out there who had a lot in common, a lot of people felt the same way, and there was hope they might be able to change things," says Koenig.

As well as social history, economics and technological change recur. The show on 1973, for instance, finds former BP chief executive Lord Browne offering his memories of the oil crisis, when the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries proclaimed an oil embargo. Living in gas-guzzling New York, Browne saw the chaos this caused. "It really was a shock, particularly for America," says Koenig. "The idea of being able to drive anywhere and do what you want without restriction [was central]. It was like having a bucket of cold water thrown over everyone."

For 1977, technology writer Michael S Malone explores the launch of the Apple II personal computer. The company's early success influenced other tech firms. "The partnership between Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs, the engineer and the marketer, is a model for how a lot of Silicon Valley companies developed thereafter," says Koenig. It is a model with inherent tensions – many of which are still evident in the tech sector today.







The Wire's Clarke Peters hosts a survey of black music in Europe – from hot jazz in Weimar Berlin to Caribbean swing bands in Blitz-era London

Lost songs

Black Music in Europe: A Hidden History

Radio Radio 4

Scheduled for Wednesday 27 March

In Europe before the Second World War, if you knew where to go, you could hear tunes rooted in the black experience. In Weimar Berlin, hot jazz was all the rage. But not everyone approved. In 1938, the Nazis held an exhibition in Düsseldorf aimed at highlighting the perceived dangers of *Entartete Musik*: 'degenerate music'.

Covering the years between the late 1920s and the early 1950s, *Black Music*

in Europe finds host Clarke Peters, of The Wire fame, hearing about black American trumpet stars in occupied Paris, Caribbean swing bands playing through the Blitz in London and the story of how Nigerian classical musician Fela Sowande worked to establish himself as a composer.

The final episode features music you might have heard in London in the 1950s, including the calypso tunes of Lord Kitchener, AKA 'Kitch', whose performance of 'London Is the Place for Me' at Tilbury Docks for reporters has become forever associated with the Windrush generation.

A massacre in Manchester

the term 'Peterloo'

coined, at a time

when the battle

of Waterloo was

was ironically

Peterloo

DVD (20th Century Fox, cert TBC)

On 16 August 1819, thousands of protesters gathered at St Peter's Field in Manchester to demand parliamentary reform. Invited by the Manchester Patriotic Union, radical orator Henry Hunt was to address the crowd. What happened next was shocking and shameful, as volunteer cavalrymen charged the crowds. Eighteen people died and several hundred were injured, while

still fresh in the memory.

How are we to understand what happened and why? Mike Leigh's drama makes a fine starting point. Featuring a strong ensemble cast – including Rory Kinnear as Hunt, Maxine Peake as Mancunian worker Nellie and, in a memorable cameo, Tim McInnerny as the hopelessly spoilt Prince Regent – it tells a complex story in a crisp style.

The events at Peterloo are key to understanding British political

reform, and it's clear that
Leigh is angry on behalf
of those who suffered.
As for the massacre
itself, there's
cinematic spectacle
for sure, but the
film's power is
rooted in the way

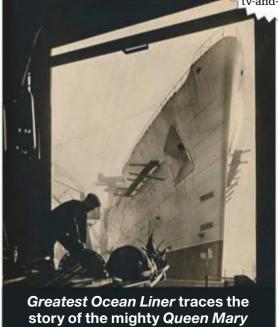
the wider story.

Leigh has explored

Esther (played by Simona Bitmate) on the day of the fateful rally in Mike Leigh's *Peterloo*

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR...

WEEKLY TV & RADIO UPDATES AT historyextra. com/topic/ tv-and-radio



The hugely popular A House Through Time (BBC Two, April) returns for a second series, this time focusing on a Georgian house in Newcastle. Turn to page 38 to read presenter David Olusoga's reflections on why we are fascinated by house genealogy. Meanwhile, Pilgrimage: The Road to Rome (BBC Two, Friday 5 April) sees celebrities - including athlete Greg Rutherford and Irish singer and politician Dana - attempt to travel the final leg of the Via Francigena pilgrim route from the Swiss Alps to Rome.

Among the highlights on Radio 4, listen out for episodes of In Our Time dealing with poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (Thursday 21 March), the Danelaw (Thursday 28 March) and the Irish famine (Thursday 4 April). On PBS America The Queen Mary: Greatest Ocean Liner (Thursday 28 March) traces the story of the Clyde-built ship, still in use today as a floating hotel. Over on History, the eight-part River Hunters (March) pairs river detectorist Beau Ouimette with wild swimmer Rick Edwards to explore archaeologically important sites in the UK's waterways.

In late March, BBC Four will mark 30 years of the world wide web. As part of a short season, How to Go Viral: The Art of the Meme with Richard Clay looks at the rise of memes as a visual language, while Me, My Selfie and I finds conceptual artist Ryan Gander exploring the selfie's history.

What if we all went vegan?
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OUTGABOUT

Clifford's Tower stands on the site where around 150 Jews took their own lives rather than renounce their faith, in 1190

HISTORY EXPLORER

The persecution of Jews in medieval England

Jonny Wilkes and Sethina Watson explore **Clifford's Tower**, where the Jewish community of 12th-century York met a terrible fate

he view from Clifford's
Tower, the remains of a
stone keep, shaped like a
four-leafed clover, offers
an enviable panorama
of the whole city of York.
The Minster dominates the skyline on one
side of the tower, although the huge spire
of the nearer St Mary's Church also makes
its presence felt; on another side, the river
Ouse winds away to the west. On a clear
day, it is possible to glimpse the moors in
the distance. Such views are certainly
worth clambering up all the steps.

At the foot of the tower, a memorial plaque reminds visitors that this landmark is tainted by tragedy. On the night of Friday 16 March 1190 around 150
Jewish men and women were trapped in the tower by a violent mob and, the plaque reads, "chose to die at each other's hands rather than renounce their faith". The daffodils that bloom on the grassy mound every spring, their petals resembling the Star of David, are another memorial to the massacre, one of the worst pogroms in medieval England.

There remain few other vestiges of this dark chapter in York's history – unsurprisingly, as construction of the stone tower we see today did not begin until 1245. The original tower was a timber motte-and-bailey structure erected by William I following the Norman conquest, along with another across the river on Baile Hill. William almost immedi-

ately had to replace both buildings after they were burned as part of the northern rebellions to his rule, to which he responded with his savage campaign of 1069–70, the Harrying of the North.

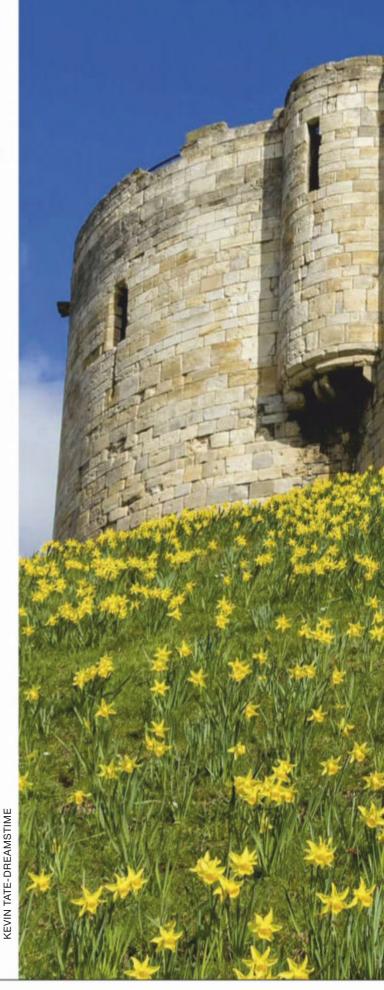
It was shortly afterwards that the first recorded Jews came to England. William himself invited them from Rouen to help nurture trade with France and, more importantly, to serve as moneylenders, an activity discouraged by the church at this time. Their arrival proved invaluable to the crown coffers and Jewish communities soon flourished in most of the principal cities of England.

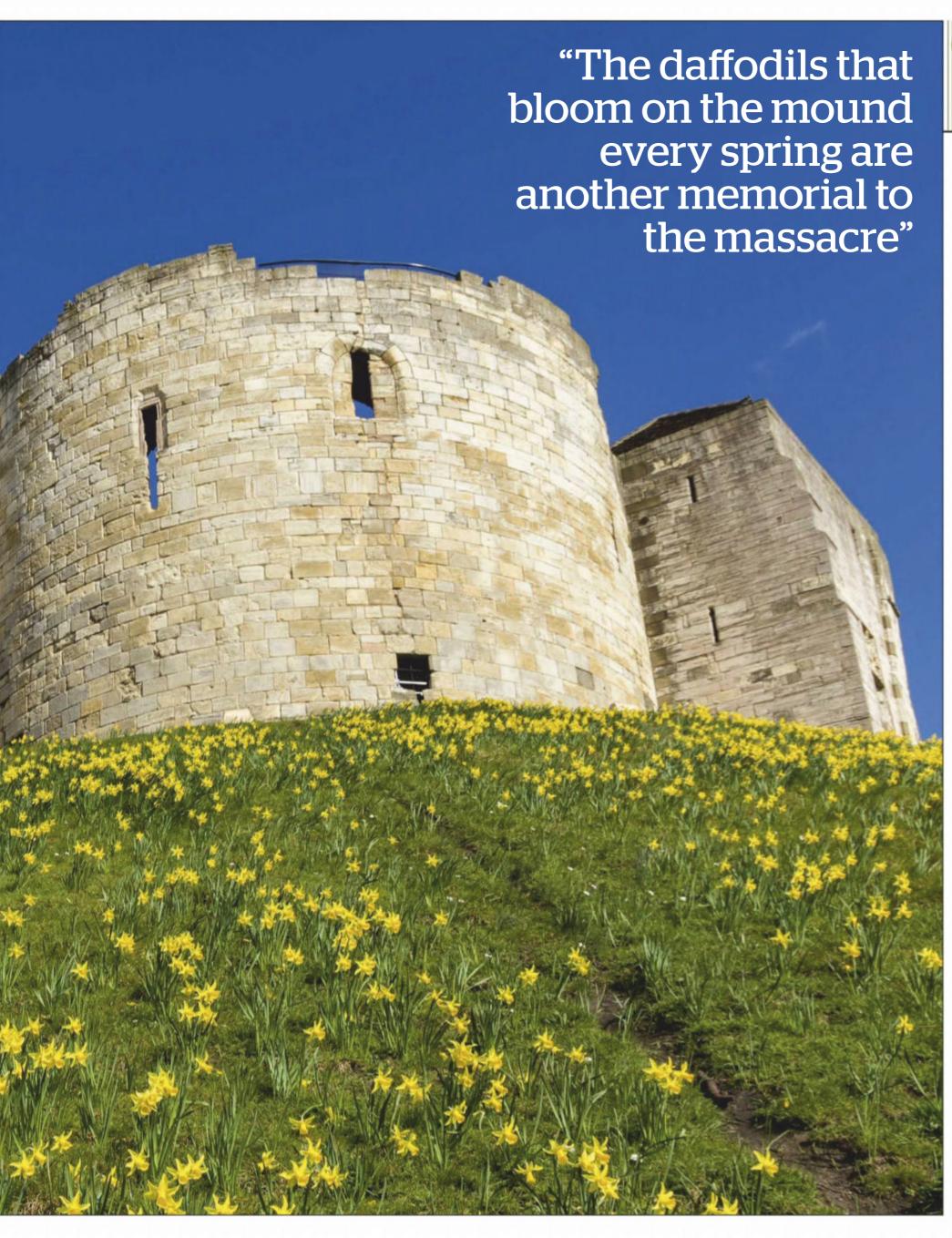
"The new arrivals moved beyond London and into many English towns," says Sethina Watson, senior lecturer in medieval history at the University of York. "The spread was slow at first, but there were communities in Norwich and Cambridge by the 1140s."

Mounting anti-Semitism

York's Jewish community emerged in the late 12th century, shortly before the massacre, when Jews from Lincoln chose to settle in the city. Jews were not confined to a specific area of York, but assimilated.

"Jewish people lived and worked alongside Christians, and there was a degree of social interaction between the two communities," says Watson. "They were, however, still considered as 'different', as they observed distinctive customs and likely spoke French (much like the new upper class), while the most successful lived in the finest houses".







An interior view of Clifford's Tower, York. The massacre of Jews in 1190 took place during a period of widespread religious zealousness and anti-Semitism in England

Such was their importance to the economy that all Jews were considered property of the crown and as 'the king's Jews', they were afforded special protections and rights. Yet because Jewish security was part of a claim of royal ownership, it was subject to the whims of individual monarchs, who needed money to fund their administrations and wars. "The Crown levied higher taxes on Jewish communities, which could become crippling and might be extorted. In the 13th century, King John imprisoned and even executed wealthy Jews to ensure that huge tallages [a form of tax] would be paid into the crown coffers," explains Watson.

Jewish communities were vulnerable, then, and conditions worsened for them as anti-Semitism took root in the 12th century. Jews were now loathed – partly out of envy at the wealth accrued by Jewish moneylenders or resentment at being in debt to them – and they emerged as targets for religious zealousness. With religious wars being launched against Muslims in the Middle East, non-Christians could now be deemed enemies – whether Muslims in the Holy Land or a Jewish neighbour.

but later died of his injuries. "Jews in England were spared the Richard I responded to the violence seen in Germany stating all Jews were and France during the first and second under his

crusades," says Watson, "but they would have been aware of it and had to live with the fear that they, too, may be subject to similar levels of violence and hate. In England, Jews were confronted with a new type of persecution: the blood libel."

Unfounded accusations spread that Jews were conspiring to murder children and use their blood to make the unleavened bread that formed a part of their Passover rituals. This became a powerful tool for anti-Jewish preaching and a catalyst for violence and even murder.

The York massacre of 1190 happened at a time of especially heightened tension and aggression. At the coronation of Richard I on 3 September 1189, hundreds of Jews travelled to London to pay homage to the king, only to be forbidden entry to the banquet and flogged. Among them were Benedict and Josce, two of York's wealthiest and most powerful Jews. The celebrating crowds in the streets of Westminster turned riotous and Benedict, who had been forcibly baptised into the Christian faith during attacks on the Jewry of London, was badly wounded. He recanted the Christian faith the next day

violence by issuing a decree



A rood screen showing the alleged crucifixion of 12-year-old William of Norwich, the first ritual murder accusation (blood libel) in Europe to be directed against Jews

RABBI YOM TOV URGED THE TRAPPED JEWS TO DIE BY THEIR OWN HANDS RATHER THAN **FACE THE BRUTALITY** THAT AWAITED THEM

protection and not to be harmed. But by the end of 1189, he had left on the third crusade and a spurious rumour circulated in his absence that Richard himself had ordered the attacks on Jews. Fuelled by the supposed permission of the king, anti-Jewish pogroms broke out in towns across England.

When fire raged through York in March 1190, there were some in the city who immediately took advantage of the confusion and the simmering anti-Semitism. The city was struggling with a vacuum in authority, having long been without an archbishop and having recently lost its sheriff. Under cover of the fire, four local lords, all indebted to Jewish moneylenders, incited a mob to invade the home of Benedict and kill his widow and sons before turning on the rest of York's Jewish community.

Trapped in the tower

Josce led survivors of the attack to the apparent safety of York Castle – soon some 150 people had taken refuge in Clifford's Tower. There they stayed for several days, besieged by the still-growing mob and the armed men who had been called in when the Jews shut out the constable

A satirical image in a 13th-century Exchequer Roll from Norwich. It depicts a wealthy Jewish moneylender as a three-faced devil, reflecting the negative way in which Jews were viewed in medieval England

VISITClifford's Tower

of the tower. There was no way out and the group was running out of food and water.

On the night of 16 March – Shabbat HaGadol, the 'great sabbath' before Passover - the renowned Rabbi Yom Tov urged the trapped Jews to die by their own hands rather than face the brutality or false conversions awaiting them outside the tower. It fell to the men to slit the throats of their families before killing themselves. Before the killings began, they also set fire to their valuables and the tower. Some lived through the night and walked out in the hopes of being spared, only to be slaughtered. Historian Barrie Dobson, who published a definitive work on the massacre, called it "the most notorious anti-Jewish atrocity" in English history.

"The event became genocidal: step by step the Christian forces, or at least their leaders, began to seek an end to the Jewish community," says Watson. "In later decades, violent riots, such as that in London in 1262, claimed more bodies. But there remains something peculiarly chilling about the York massacre. It can't be attributed to an eruption or a riot, a world turned upside down. It took place over days; there was deliberation behind the actions". In a sign of this, the mob eventually left Clifford's Tower and went to the Minster where they burned the records of any debts to the Jews.

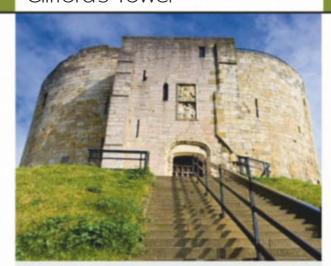
"The crown's response was swift. Royal agents were dispatched, inquests solicited testimony and ascribed guilt, fines were levied and names listed in the pipe rolls. The response was systematic and must have been intimidating theatre."

News of the massacre travelled with equal swiftness and it was immortalised by Jewish and Christian writers alike. But, as Watson puts it: "The Christian world moved on; even the perpetrators continued with their lives."

Forgotten history

York's Jewish community had been eradicated, but it recovered with surprising speed and was active again by the first decade of the 13th century.

Across England, though, hostility and persecution against the Jewish population intensified. Jews were taxed even more heavily; faced ongoing accusations concerning the blood libel; were imprisoned and murdered; and Jews' property and synagogues were damaged or confiscated. By the



Tower Street, York, YO1 9SA

• english-heritage.org.uk

middle of the 13th century, every Jewish person over the age of seven was forced to wear an identifying badge on their clothes – usually yellow or white and depicting the two tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Laws restricted where Jews could live and their movements, and their influence as financiers dwindled. In 1275, after Edward I passed the Statute of the Jewry, they were prohibited from lending money altogether. Many were forced to resort to illegal coin clipping – trimming the edges of coins to melt down and make new coins. The number of Jews arrested rose dramatically, with more than 250 executed at the Tower of London in 1278. Many Jews chose to leave England in the hope of establishing lives elsewhere.

"Local expulsions had been happening for half a century but in July 1290, just over a century after the York massacre, Edward I expelled all Jews from England," says Watson. Between 4,000 and 16,000 fled before the deadline of 1 November, and the few who remained had to convert or hide their true identity. Their formal readmission wasn't until 1656.

York is a city shaped by many cultures and ethnic groups, yet it is striking to think about how much of the Jewish experience has been lost. Even here, on the site of a horrific pogrom, little evidence remains. Except, that is, for the plaque from 1978 and the poignant sight of the mound turned yellow by daffodils.



Sethina Watson (left) is senior lecturer in medieval history at the University of York and co-editor of Christians and Jews in Angevin

England: The York Massacre of 1190 (2013). Words: Jonny Wilkes, freelance writer

JEWISH HISTORY THREE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Bevis Marks Synagogue

LONDON

Where Jews have worshipped for 300 years

London boasted the largest Jewish community in medieval England, and its only Jewish cemetery until 1177. Bevis Marks Synagogue in Cheapside was built much later, in 1701, but has held regular services since, making it Britain's oldest synagogue in continuous use. Inside is a spectacular Classical-style ark containing the Torah scrolls, and seven striking hanging brass candelabra.

sephardi.org.uk/bevis-marks

2 Manchester Jewish Museum

MANCHESTER

Where a synagogue became a museum

This building, completed in 1874, was formerly a synagogue for Spanish and Portuguese Jews, or Sephardim, who had been expelled from their countries and came to Britain. It is the oldest surviving synagogue building in Manchester and now serves as a museum about Jewish settlement in the area and the community over the last 200 years.

manchesterjewishmuseum.com

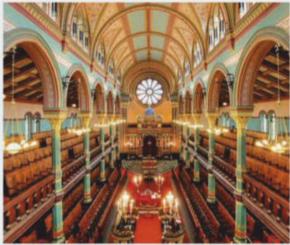
3 Princes Road Synagogue

LIVERPOOL

Where synagogue architecture bloomed in spectacular fashion

Its size, splendour and lavish interior is why Princes Road Synagogue is considered one of the finest examples of Moorish Revival architectural style in Britain. Consecrated in 1874, it was designed by brothers William James and George Ashdown Audsley and can seat more than 800 people.

princesroad.org



The lavishly gilded interior of the Princes Road Synagogue in Liverpool



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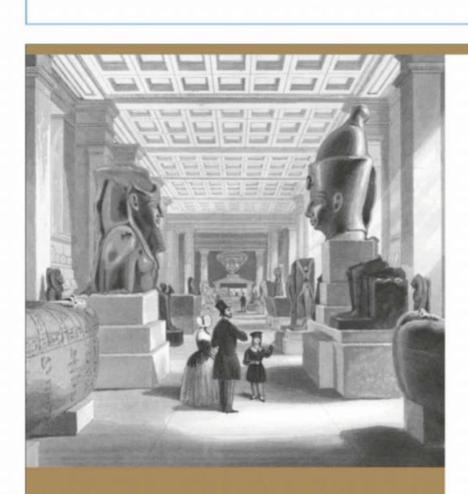
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The London Backstreet Walk | From Hyde Park to The Tower

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FIVE THINGS TO DO IN APRIL



Divided world

EXHIBITION AND EVENTS

Cold War season The National Archives, Kew 4 April–9 November

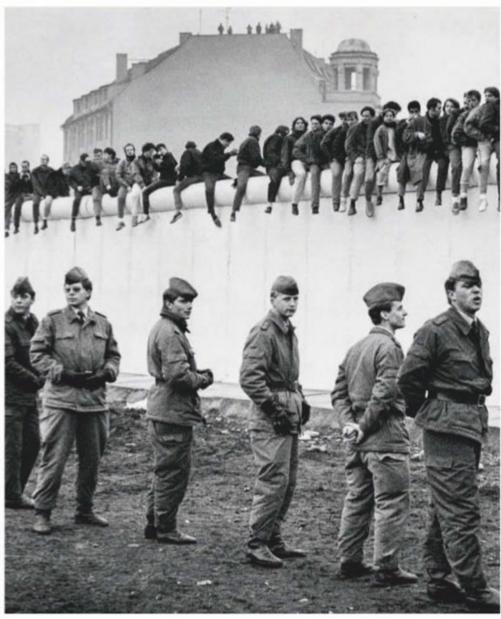
- **2** 020 8876 3444
- nationalarchives.gov.uk/coldwar



he National Archives is launching a Cold War season this month, examining life in Britain during this turbulent era. Launching on 4 April – the 70th anniversary of the formation of Nato – the programme of events will mark several Cold War milestones, including the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November.

The season opens with an exhibition, Protect and Survive: Britain's Cold War Revealed, which features a range of Cold War documents. Items on show include political memos, spy confessions, civil defence posters and even a letter from Winston Churchill to the Queen. The exhibition also explores what it was like to live under the threat of nuclear war, as well as the wider history of the political tensions between the east and west at this time.

A series of events will run alongside the exhibition, including an evening with Dame Stella Rimington, the former head of MI5 who is said to have inspired the character of 'M', as played by Judi Dench. Historian Juliet Gardner will explore the cultural and social developments in Britain in the 20 years that followed the Second World War, while contemporary records specialist Mark Dunton examines the case of civil servant John Vassall, who was caught in a Soviet Secret Service 'honey trap' in 1962. Visit the National Archives website for a full list of events.



West Berliners line the Berlin Wall in 1989 as East German soldiers guard an unopened section at Potsdamer Platz. The fall of the Berlin Wall will be explored in the National Archives' Cold War season this month

EXHIBITION / FREE ENTRY

The Art of African Metalwork

National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh Until 25 August

- **2** 0300 123 6789
- nms.ac.uk

A selection of 19th and early 20th-century objects from west and central Africa (including the brass embossed tray pictured right) demonstrate how brass and copper once featured as mediums of exchange, status and power in

RE-OPENING

Hillsborough Castle and Gardens

Hillsborough, Northern Ireland From 10 April

- **2** 028 9268 1308
- hrp.org.uk/hillsboroughcastle

Hillsborough Castle and Gardens re-opens its doors to the public in April following a five-year, £20m restoration project.

Carefully conserved state rooms and landscaped gardens will be used to help reveal the history of the royal residence.

EXHIBITION / FREE ENTRY

Disrupt? Peterloo and Protest

People's History Museum, Manchester Until 23 February 2020

- **2** 0161 838 9190
- phm.org.uk

Marking the bicentenary of the August 1819 Peterloo massacre, when cavalrymen charged campaigners meeting to demand parliamentary reform, this exhibition both tells the story of Peterloo and highlights its relevance today. Objects on show include Peterloo artefacts, brought together for the very first time, and pieces that tell more recent stories of political protest.

EXHIBITION / FREE ENTRY

Crimes Uncovered: The First Generation of Holocaust Researchers

The Wiener Library, London Until 17 May

- **2** 0207 636 7247
- wienerlibrary.co.uk

During and after the
Holocaust, several people
and institutions recorded
and collected information
about the atrocities. Their
stories, and the quest to
bring perpetrators to justice,
will be under the spotlight
at the Wiener Library this
month. Among the individuals
featured is Vasily Grossman,
who documented the
extermination of Soviet Jews.

Africa.

MY FAVOURITE PLACE

The ancient Greek theatre at Epidaurus, which boasts superb acoustics and aesthetics

The Peloponnese,

Greece



by Anna Beer

In the latest in our historical holiday series, Anna follows in the footsteps of Franks, Turks and Byzantines on a sun-kissed peninsula

t was not the classical sites that first lured me to the Peloponnese. Instead, it was Patrick Leigh Fermor's Mani: Travels in the Southern Peloponnese, an account of his late 1950s hike through Mani's arid landscape of mountains and sea. Leigh Fermor slept on the rooftops of crumbling tower houses, the evocative remnants of centuries of blood feuds, and was thrilled to his romantic core.

Even in the 1950s, however, this beautiful peninsula in southern Greece wasn't quite

as remote as Leigh Fermor presented it. When he wrote about the village of Kardamyli, his future home, he edited out the factory chimney of the old olive-oil works. By the time I got to Stoupa, just south of Kardamyli, in the 1990s, it was a package-holiday destination, with village rooms rather than grand hotels the order of the day.

If Leigh Fermor's descriptions of a still-medieval corner of Europe brought me to the Peloponnese, it was a day trip to Mystras – a long, winding bus

ride from Stoupa – that would bring me back in the future. I recommend wandering through the streets of this Byzantine town in the foothills of the Taïyetos mountains: you will stumble upon crumbling churches and discover fading frescoes. (Mystras is near Sparta, so it is also deeply evocative of another history, that ancient city-state's struggle with Athens.)

Mystras was a revelation – and led me to another Byzantine wonder, the unique fortress town of Monemvasia, linked to the mainland only by a causeway. Founded in AD 583 by refugees from the Slavic and Avaric invasions of Greece, the city flourished between the 10th and 15th centuries before being almost entirely abandoned, then (partially) brought back to life in the late 20th century.

To arrive in Monemvasia is a traveller's dream. From the mainland, all you can see is the causeway and bare rockface. Get closer, and you catch sight of a gateway. Pass through, and you enter a car-less, crumbling, cat-filled city.

I would recommend staying overnight to experience

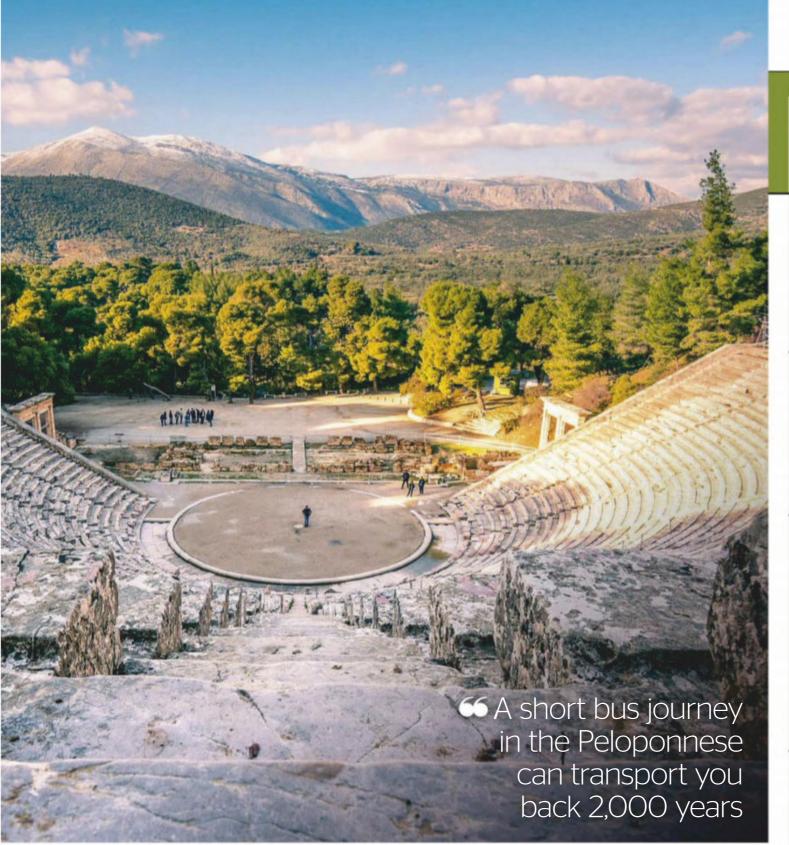


Monemvasia's full magic. In season, boatloads of tourists arrive for the day from Nafplio, which is the most well-known city in the region, and definitely worth visiting too. Elegantly situated on a beautiful bay, the old town offers an evocative, if somewhat manicured, insight into Greece's recent history. Controlled by the Franks, Venetians, Turks, Venetians (again), then Turks (again) – all of whom have left their mark on the city – Nafplio was the first capital of the modern Greek state, liberated from Ottoma: control in April 1822.

The really special thing about the Peloponnese is that a fairly short bus journey can transport you back 2,000 years. And, after all, it would be foolish to miss the region's spectacular classical



The bell tower and church of Elkomenos Christos in the "car-less, crumbling, cat-filled Byzantine city" of Monemvasia



sites. First stop, from Nafplio, might be the remarkably intact theatre at Epidaurus, with its superb acoustics; Olympia – a longer car ride this time – is a perfect destination if travelling with young children, who can sprint up and down the running track, living the Olympic dream; and don't miss the Temple of Apollo at Bassae, another stunning combination of architecture and landscape.

However, my heart belongs to some less well-known historical sites. You'll need a head for heights because the roads are narrow and precipitous, but Arcadia (and who would not wish to spend time in Arcadia?) offers fascinating villages such as Dimitsana and Stemnitsa. The former has the Open-Air Water Power Museum, an intriguing

insight into the workings of pre-industrial society, while the latter boasts a Folklore Museum, allied to a School of Silversmithery and Goldsmithery, which works to sustain the region's tradition of jewellery making. Both villages have spectacular settings, with superb hiking possibilities, a network of ancient paths leading through impressive gorges or to remote monasteries.

Another hidden gem (and not just for train geeks, although I admit to being just that) is the 1890s-built rack and pinion railway which begins at Diakopto on the north coast of the Peloponnese. In addition to marvelling at the impressive engineering, and the obligatory monastery en route, the train's destination, Kalavrita, is a

powerful reminder of Europe's more recent history. The village clock is forever stopped at 14:34 to commemorate a massacre of the inhabitants by the Nazi occupiers in reprisal for the Greeks' killing of captured German prisoners.

Whether it's the Nazi occupation or the war between Athens and Sparta, the past is always tangible in the Peloponnese. And, if all that history is just too much, there are always the stunning beaches.

Anna Beer is visiting fellow at Kellogg College, University of Oxford. Her books include *Patriot* or *Traitor*: The Life and Death of Sir Walter Ralegh (Oneworld, 2018)

Next month: Sarah Peverley explores the treasures of Rome

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS



WHAT TO PACK

Comfortable shoes for scrambling around the sites, and – for any time other than summer – warm clothes for chilly evenings in the mountains.

GETTING THERE

If you have the time, it is wonderful to arrive in Patras by boat from Venice, then pick up a hire car. There are direct flights to Kalamata from the UK in season, or year-round to Athens.

BEST TIME TO GO

My favourite times are spring and autumn, when you may have wonderful places to yourself, although at Easter the crowds become part of the experience. The downside is that fewer places are open, it can be cold and wet, and only the hardy will want to swim in the sea!

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Food and drink, definitely. Olive oil and honey are obvious good choices, but also try the new generation of Greek wines. For more lasting mementoes, perhaps jewellery from Stemnitsa.



Been there...

Have you visited **the Peloponnese?** Do you have a top tip for readers? Contact us via Twitter or Facebook

twitter.com/historyextra facebook.com/historyextra

Historic DAYS OUT



Hever Castle & Gardens

Experience over 700 years of history at the childhood home of Anne Boleyn. The splendid rooms contain an important collection of Tudor paintings and two prayer books inscribed by Anne Boleyn. Young visitors can let off steam in the adventure playground and find their way through the 100 year old Yew Maze.

hevercastle.co.uk // info@hevercastle.co.uk



Belvoir Castle

One of the finest surviving examples of Regency architecture in the world, Belvoir Castle stands proud above Leicestershire's stunning Vale of Belvoir. A 19th -century castle, it's full of interesting artefacts and treasures collected by the Dukes of Rutland over the centuries. It's a far from ordinary experience.

01476 871001 // belvoircastle.com



The Old Operating Theatre

Housed in the attic of the early eighteenth-century church of the old St Thomas' Hospital, this atmospheric museum offers a unique insight into the history of medicine and surgery. Predating anaesthetics and antiseptics, it is the oldest surviving surgical theatre in Europe. Access to the attic is through a narrow 52-step spiral staircase.

020 7188 2679 // oldoperatingtheatre.com



Roch Castle

Roch Castle sits high above the Welsh landscape offering panoramic views of St Brides Bay and the Preseli Hills. Choose a bed and breakfast stay or take exclusive use and indulge in unique accommodation, fine dining at sister hotel Twr y Felin, St Davids, and the perfect location to explore the UK's only truly coastal National Park.

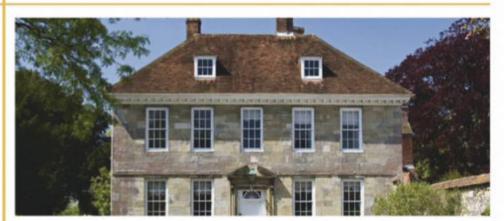
01437 725 566 // rochcastle.com



Severn Valley Railway

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01562 757900 // svr.co.uk



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01722 326546 // arundells.org

Now that spring is nearly here, this is the best time to plan an adventure with all the historians in your life.



Weald & Downland Living Museum

Our first Historic Life Weekend with a focus on 'Museum Makers' will be held on 30 & 31 March – including free entry to all Mothers and Grandmothers on Mothering Sunday (31 March). Come and explore our 50 historic homes and buildings, and meet friendly farm animals. Dogs on leads are welcome. Free parking.

01243 811 363 // wealddown.co.uk



Fishbourne Roman Palace

Unravel the mystery of life at the Palace nearly 2,000 years ago. Explore the magnificent 1st – 3rd century mosaic floors and discover more about those who lived at the Palace from artefacts found during excavations. Step beyond the archaeology in the formal and Roman plants gardens which feature many unusual plants of the time.

01243 785859 // sussexpast.co.uk



Buckfast Abbey

Nestled against the dramatic backdrop of Dartmoor National Park, Buckfast Abbey is a working Benedictine monastery which has just celebrated 1,000 years of history. Other attractions include the Abbey gift and bookshops, Monastic Exhibition and The Grange Restaurant, which is open all day, along with hotel and self-catering accommodation.

01364 645500 // buckfast.org.uk/whats-on



Thame Museum Oxford

This lively and active Museum is packed with displays reflecting life in and around Thame in the past 5000 years. The Elizabethan Wall Paintings room is a must-see attraction with its interactive display giving the visitor a detailed view of the life of the merchant who owned them. Opening Times: Tues, Wed, Sat 10am-4pm; Sunday 1pm-4pm. Admission free.

01844 212801 // thamemuseum.org



Binchester Roman Fort

Walk in the footsteps of the Romans in County Durham. Binchester (Vinovia) was founded around 80 AD and, for a time, was one of the largest Roman military installations in the whole of Northern Britain. It is now home to some of the best-preserved hypocausts (underfloor heating systems) in the whole of Britain.

01388 663 089 // durham.gov.uk/binchester



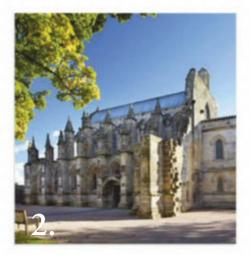
Clitheroe Castle and Museum

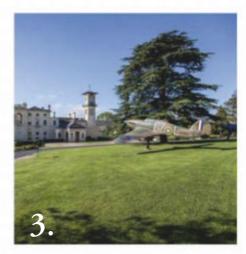
Clitheroe Castle sits at the centre of the market town of Clitheroe within the beautiful Ribble Valley. The castle grounds consist of landscaped gardens, children's play areas, a labyrinth and a skate park. The museum tells the story of Clitheroe, with something for everyone: children's explorer back packs, interactive displays and oral history recordings.

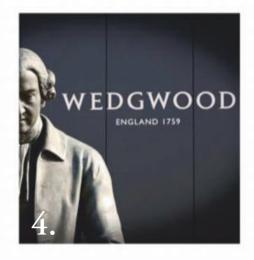
01200 424568 // lancashire.gov.uk/museums

Spring Heritage Collection



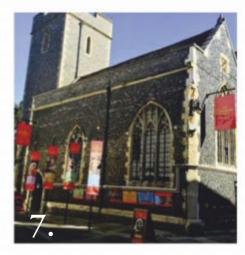






















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bamburghcastle.com 01668 214515

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rosslynchapel.com 0131 440 2159

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bentleypriorymuseum.org.uk | 020 8950 5526

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worldofwedgwood.com

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derbymuseums.org | 01332 641 901

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www.freemasonry.london.museum

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newarktownhallmuseum.co.uk

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nam.ac.uk | 020 7730 0717

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info@canterburytales.org.uk | 01227 696002

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littlehamptonmuseum.co.uk | 01903 738100

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MISCELLANY

A&Q



QUIZ

BY JULIAN HUMPHRYS

Try your hand at this month's history quiz

ONLINE QUIZZES historyextra.com

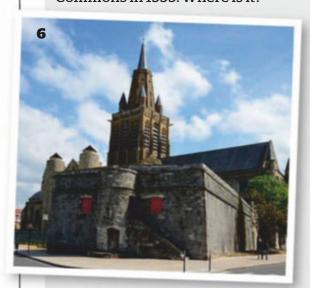
/quiz

1. When it opened in 1965 it was Britain's tallest building, but its existence was designated an official secret for years. What is it?

2. Who did the
16th-century
bishop of London
John Aylmer (left)
describe as
"doltified with
the dregs of the
devil's dunghill"?

3. How did Scottish apothecary James Tytler rise to fame in August 1784?

- **4.** Holbein, Rubens, Van Dyck, Lely, Kneller. Which of these English court painters was born in England?
- **5.** Who or what did Sir Ewen Cameron shoot at Killiecrankie in 1680?
- **6.** The place where this church stands last sent MPs to the House of Commons in 1555. Where is it?



QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1. The Post Office (or BT) Tower.
- 2. Women.
- **3.** He became the first person in Britain to fly in a hot-air balloon.
- 4. None of them.
- **5.** The suspected last wolf in Britain.
- 6. Calais.

GOT A QUESTION?

Write to *BBC History Magazine*, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN. Email: historymagazine@historyextra.com or submit via our website: *historyextra.com*

• What is the difference between a castle and a fort?

William Strickland, Edgbaston, Birmingham

A In terms of what the words meant originally, there is very little difference: both are ultimately derived from Latin, with castle coming from the word *castra*, meaning 'camp' or 'encampment', and fort from *fortis*, that is, strong. Hence in the Middle Ages we find writers using words such as *castra*, *castellum* and *fortalitium* more or less interchangeably to describe the same sort of fortified buildings, just as people today will use 'castle', 'stronghold' and 'fortress' to mean the same thing.

In modern times, the two words have acquired more precise meanings,

IS IT A CASTLE?

which have served to distinguish them. The main difference lies in their residential function. A castle could be defined as the fortified residence of a great lord – a king or queen, a baron or a bishop – and his or her household. Hence, we expect a castle to have not only a defensible exterior but a palatial interior, with halls and chambers suitable for accommodating aristocrats. A fort, by contrast, now signifies something that might be very strong in military terms, but in residential terms is far more basic, with only communal barracks for soldiers,

and perhaps a private dwelling for its commanding officer.

There are still, however, confusing exceptions. The defences built by Henry VIII to guard the south coast, such as Deal, Walmer and Pendennis, are best regarded as forts, but Henry and his architects called them 'castles', and the name has stuck.

Marc Morris's books include Castle: A History of the Buildings That Shaped Medieval Britain

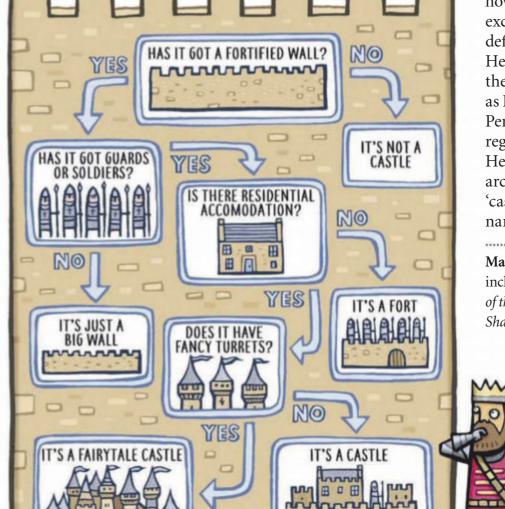


ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN MCBETH

ALAMY

SAMANTHA'S RECIPE CORNER



Every issue, picture editor **Samantha Nott** brings you a recipe from the past. This month it's a Swiss cheese dish that has unlikely origins in the Crimean War

Swiss Malakoffs

Melted cheese is one of life's guilty pleasures, so I was delighted to discover that there's a historic dish that combines this calorific concept with the dark art of deep frying.

Comprising a ball of Gruyère on top of a crispy bread base, the malakoff is said to have been invented at the end of the Crimean War, as Swiss mercenaries triumphant (and hungry) from battle - returned home from the siege of Sevastopol. The name itself is a homage to the Malakoff Redoubt, which was stormed by French forces on 8 September 1855, effectively bringing the siege to its conclusion.

Today, malakoffs are popular along the northern shores of Lake Geneva, where they can be enjoyed as an appetiser with a glass of white wine. They could also be served as an alternative to cheese fondue, giving your 1970s dinner party an 1850s twist!

INGREDIENTS

6 slices white bread 450g Gruyère cheese, grated 3 tbsp flour 1/8 tsp nutmeg, grated 2 cloves garlic, chopped 2 eggs, lightly beaten 60ml dry white wine 2 tbsp kirsch (cherry brandy) Canola oil, for frying Rock salt and ground black pepper, to taste

METHOD

Cut out discs from the bread slices using a 1 to 2 inch ring cutter, putting the crusts aside for another use.

Mix the cheese, flour, nutmeg, garlic, eggs, salt and pepper in a bowl, before adding the wine and kirsch. Once the mixture has been stirred to a thick paste, scoop it onto the bread discs and use wet hands to sculpt smooth domes 1½ inches in height.

Using a large saucepan filled with 2 inches of oil, deep-fry each of the malakoffs cheese-side down, flipping once, for 6–8 minutes. They should be crisp and golden brown.

VERDICT

"A warm, gooey delight. Heaven for cheese lovers"

Difficulty: 2/10 Time: 30 minutes

Based on a recipe by Victoria Balazs culinaryimmigration.com





The ruins of Nagasaki, Japan, after the US dropped the second atom bomb on 9 August 1945, killing tens of thousands of people

• What was the intended purpose of the second atomic bomb dropped over Nagasaki?

PE Francois, West Midlands

To hasten the end of A hostilities. Japan's choice lay between unconditional surrender and "prompt and utter destruction", and the US was already pursuing a strategic bombing campaign aimed at obliterating cities. Entering service in July, the atomic bomb became another item in the arsenal available to commanders, to be used alongside other weapons and tactics employed in pursuit of victory, hopefully to be achieved without the need for invasion.

The first bomb did not lead to surrender; even after the second, there were voices in Japan keen to fight on. Perhaps, they posited, the Americans had no more bombs. On the other hand, the Soviets had now declared war on Japan, and the Allied ultimatum

seemed not to compromise the emperor's position, with Hirohito playing a decisive role in Japan's surrender, given cabinet deadlock.

There had grown an assumption in the US that at least two bombs would be used, and a third was scheduled to follow within a fortnight. The second bomb was intended for Kokura, with poor visibility leading the aircrew to switch to the backup target, Nagasaki.

Use of the second bomb demonstrated that America could manufacture in quantity and provided justification for the dual uranium (Hiroshima) and plutonium (Nagasaki) bomb project.

Ashley Jackson is professor of imperial and military history at King's College London

......

RIDGEMAN

What is the name for a masterless samurai warrior? (see 5 down)



CROSSWORD PRIZE

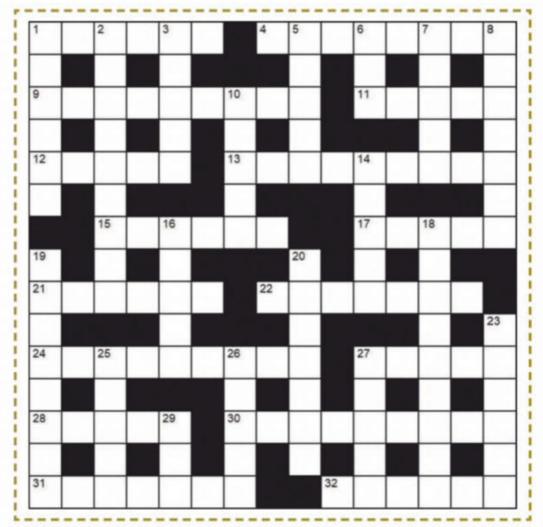
Book worth £20 for 5 winners



Across

- 1 See 29 down
- 4 Subsistence farmers, particularly victims of the Highland Clearances in the early 19th century (8)
- 9 'Pete Marsh' was the name used by the press for this Iron Age body found in Cheshire in 1984 (6,3)
- 11 Phenomenon discovered accidentally by Wilhelm Röntgen in 1895 (1-4)
- 12 See 27 down
- 13 The October _ ___(1905), issued by Nicholas II, ushered in a period of constitutional monarchy in Russia (9)
- 15 Troops in the service of the British East India Company, who instigated the Indian Rebellion of 1857 (6)
- 17 Nerve gas which was used in the Tokyo subway attack in March 1995 (5)
- 21 Third-century BC Chinese general, one of the 'Three Heroes' of the dynasty he helped to found (3.3)
- 22/3 Welsh road tollgate charges were the spark for these disturbances between 1839 and 1843 (7,5)
- 24 The German combined armed forces during Nazi rule (9)
- 27 '____Jane' was the nickname given to a Hollywood star, as a result of her anti-war protest activities in the 1970s (5)
- 28 A close-fitting medieval visored helmet with a neck guard (5)
- 30 Charles, 19th-century Scottish chemist, whose name is associated with a certain type of garment he invented (9)
- 31 St Andrew's Castle, Fife, has an infamous bottle _____ or oubliette (7) 32 Phoenician seaport, 20 miles
- north of modern-day Beirut (6)

- 1 US city thrust abruptly into the international spotlight by an event of 22 November 1963 (6)
- 2 'Pioneer of the revolution' that overthrew China's Qing (Manchu) dynasty in the early years of the 20th century (3,3-3)
- 3 See 22 across
- 5 In feudal Japan, a masterless samurai warrior (5)



- 6 See 29 down
- **7** Sir Arthur , British archaeologist, who excavated Knossos and named the Minoan civilisation (5)
- 8 Poet and recipient of the Military Cross who became a high-profile protestor against the First World War (7)
- **10** '____ Juanita' is the name given to the well-preserved remains of a sacrificed Incan girl discovered in the Peruvian Andes in 1995 (5)
- 14 Name of the Roman way that runs from Exeter to Lincoln (5)
- 16 In Greek mythology, the king of Troy during the Trojan War (5)
- 18 US musical genre that broke into public consciousness in the early 1950s, and went on to have a revolutionary, lasting influence on pop music (4,1,4)
- 19 An ancient raised area of extensive woodland in south-east England (3.5)
- **20** ____ Knollys, the noblewoman who secretly wed Robert Dudley, Elizabeth I's favourite, in 1578 (7)
- 23 See 25 down
- **25/23** A term which came into popular usage following the founding of the UN General Assembly's Universal Declaration in 1948 (5,6)

26 Member of a nomadic Turkish people, forced by the Mongol invasion of 1237 to seek asylum in Hungary (5) 27/12 Member of a prestigious American family, a historian who wrote an autobiography, The Education of _____, published in 1918 (5,5) 29/1 across/6 down Nickname, used by his foes as well as friends, of the commander of the Afrika Korps during

Compiled by **Eddie James**

the Second World War (3,6,3)

The Cold War

by Norman Friedman

Written by a leading US defence analyst, this beautifully illustrated volume brings a period of high global drama to life with maps, black-and-white photographs, rare historical documents and vivid Soviet propaganda posters. Friedman leads us through the Cuban missile crisis and the nuclear alerts of 1973 and 1983, drawing parallels with today's rocky political situation.

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SOLUTION TO OUR FEBRUARY 2019 CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Stigand, 5 Matilda, 9 Lollards, 11 Dudley, 12 Ralegh, 13 Isaiah, 15/6 Motte-and-bailey, 17 Talisman, 18 Ormskirk, 21 Young, 23 Besant, 24/7 Plains Indians, 26 Fokker, 27 Henry III, 28 Address, 29 Land Tax

Down: 2 Thomas More, 3 Gilbert, 8 Diet, 10 Swift, 14 Tanganyika, 16 Epidaurus, 19 Speaker, 20 Ketch, 22 Umayyad, 24 Penda, 25/4 Lord North FIVE WINNERS OF ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY BY DAN SNOW

T Carroll, Nottinghamshire; G Sampson, Guernsey; B Myers, Durham; H Harrison, Somerset; R Potts, Wiltshire

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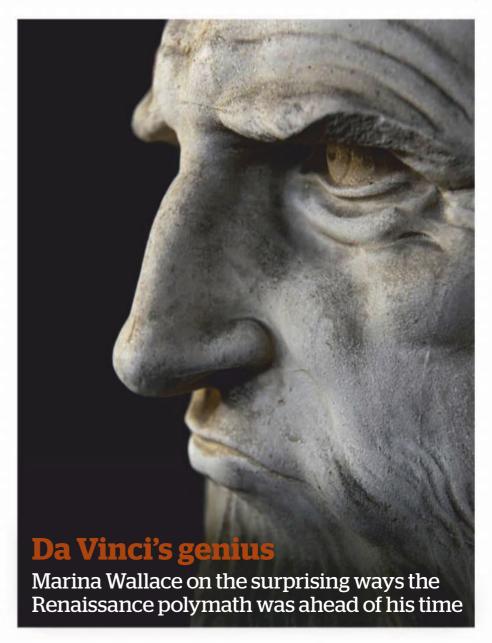




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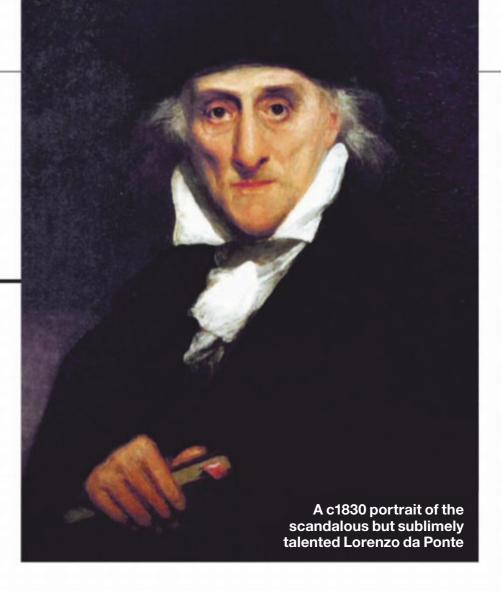


"He was a priest, lover, libertine and friend of Casanova - and that's all before he became the cocreator of three of the most sublime operas ever written"

BBC presenter Katie Derham chooses

Lorenzo da Ponte

1749-1838



orenzo da Ponte, born Emanuele Conegliano, was an Italian poet and librettist (a writer of words for musical works), who famously collaborated with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart on several important pieces. Born into a Jewish family, he was baptised in his teens and briefly served as a priest, but was expelled from the Venice in 1779 for his controversial views and scandalous personal life (after fathering two children with a mistress, he was charged with "public concubinage" and "abduction of a respectable woman"). He then moved to Vienna to become official poet to Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II, and went on to write several acclaimed librettos. Following the emperor's death in 1790, he travelled to London and later to America, where he taught at Columbia College.

When did you first hear about Lorenzo da Ponte?

Lorenzo da Ponte is one of those intriguing also-rans of classical music history. He's a name that few would recognise, but I bet many would recognise his work. He wrote the librettos for three of Mozart's greatest operas: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*. I'd heard his name over the years, but had always been much more dazzled by his musical pal Wolfgang Amadeus... until I read his biography by Rodney Bolt, which blew my mind.

What kind of person was he?

Don't get me wrong, Lorenzo da Ponte isn't particularly heroic in the traditional sense of the word. In fact, he probably was a complete nightmare to live with – flaky at best, duplicitous and vain at worst. But what a life! By the time he was 40, he had been a poet, priest, lover and a libertine, a friend of Casanova, a collaborator then enemy of (the celebrated Italian composer) Antonio Salieri – and that's all without mentioning three of the most sublime operas ever written.

Da Ponte's rackety life took him from Venice to Vienna, to George III's London and finally to Thomas Jefferson's America, where he ended his long life as a bookseller and professor of Italian at Columbia College.

What made Da Ponte a hero?

There's much to criticise, and perhaps not too much you'd want to emulate on a human level from Da Ponte's life, but his librettos to those three operas are so wonderful, and goodness me, what stories he could have told!

What was his finest hour?

There wasn't *one* finest hour, but he was just such a survivor. There were so many times he could have thrown in the towel, but his powers of reinvention were extraordinary. And that's what led him to take on so many different guises throughout his life.

Is there anything you don't particularly admire about him? Much, but he definitely wasn't dull, was he?

Can you see any parallels between his life and your own? I think his favourite cities are also mine. Beyond that, though, I'm not sure I should be aspiring to most of his life choices!

If you could meet Da Ponte, what would you ask him? I'd buy him several bottles of good claret, and prod him into reliving and retelling tales from his riotous youth, spent with some of the most colourful characters in musical history.

Katie Derham is a broadcaster who presents *In Tune* on BBC Radio 3 and *Discovery Concerts* as part of *Our Classical Century* on BBC Four





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